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वुलनर भारतभारती ग्रन्थमाला-१

Woolner Indological Series-1

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THE  
FOREIGN POLICY  
OF  
WARREN HASTINGS

BY

**RAM PARKASH, M.A.,**

*Professor, D. A.-V. College, Hoshiarpur.*

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Ram



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विश्वेश्वरानन्द वैदिक-शोध-संस्थानम्  
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DR. A. C. WOOLNER  
AND  
MRS. MARY WOOLNER

## Woolner Indological Series Its Dedication

### *I. The Noble Couple*

My revered teacher of sacred memory, the late Dr. Alfred Cooper Woolner was a brilliant pupil of that well-known master of details, Professor A. A. Macdonell of Oxford. He was twenty-five when he joined the Panjab University at Lahore in 1903 as its Registrar as well as the Principal of its Oriental College. He held the Registrar's post till 1920 after which he was made, first, the Dean of University Instruction and, subsequently, in 1928, the Vice Chancellor. Simultaneously, he remained in the Principal's chair till he breathed his last on January 7, 1936. Whichever office he occupied, he brought to bear on it the noble impression of his gifted personality, thereby adding to its honour and dignity. He had completely identified himself with the University. Indeed, it could be said of him with great aptness that he and the University formed one, indivisible whole. One could never think of the one without thinking of the other. He was in his fifty-eighth year and at the height of his glory when he fell ill and passed away in harness, leaving behind his devoted wife, a large number of friends and admirers and hundreds of pupils to mourn his irretrievable loss.

In his personal life, he was an embodiment of simplicity, frugality and hard work. He was very abstemious and perfect teetotaller. A man of quiet nature, homely habits and simple style of living, he was devoted to books, and enjoyed walks, in the company of his wife, along the banks of brooks. He would invariably spend his vacation in the midst of wild nature in the hills and, at its end, go a-hiking for a hundred

miles or so. He was kind, generous and upright in his dealings with all, and was like a fond father to his pupils. He would love to do all he could for them. And, to those of them with a special aptitude for scholarship, he was a never-failing friend, guide and patron. Himself an ideal student throughout his life, nothing pleased him better than youngmen taking pains to acquire the habit of marshalling facts before making ill-founded generalisations and proclaiming new discoveries. He was averse to all humbug. The ideal of his life is beautifully summed up in his following Vedic epitaph, engraved in Devanāgarī characters and accompanied by its rendering into English :—

“असतो मा सद्गमय ।  
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।  
मृत्योर्मातृतं गमय ।

*“From the Unreal lead me unto the Real ;  
From Darkness lead me unto Light ;  
From Death lead me unto Life Eternal.”*

That epitaph was the selection of his wife, Mrs. Mary Emily Woolner who rightfully claimed that it expressed those noblest sentiments which her husband loved the most. So long as the tomb remains intact at Lahore, it will serve as a standing testimony to the universally attuned Indian cultural background of that angelic English lady herself. Consonant with the highest reach of universal Sanskritic culture, she not only gave her husband her best love and devotion as his due, but also worshipped him, literally, as her eternal hero. And, when, at last, the Providence called him to eternal rest, she passed every moment of the period of her survival, eight years and eleven days, in thinking of him when she was awake and in dreaming of him when she was asleep. Thus, she worshipped him to her last in the shrine of her heart. India was dear to her, Veda and Sanskrit were dear to her, because her Alfred had made the former his home and the latter his life-interest. This seemingly frail but really heroic woman had her eternal merger in the hero of her heart on January 18, 1944, bequeathing, practically, her entire estate to the Panjab University towards creation, after the name of her life-hero,

of research scholarships at the Oriental College and of a Chair as well as a Lecture Foundation at our Institute for advancement of Sanskritic studies.

## 2. *The Great Benefactors.*

My contact with Dr. Woolner began in 1915 when as an Honours Under Graduate I had the privilege of first sitting at his feet. During the years 1917-1919, I had the rare advantage, in my Post Graduate Studies, of receiving his exclusive attention, because, as chance would have it, there was no other student in my class. This opportunity combined with the guidance that I had from him during the next two years of my incumbency as a Research Scholar at the University, really, provided me with the necessary grounding on which I have been able to do my humble bit to this day.

When in the early twenties, our Institute was established at Lahore and we launched our Vedic Lexicographical Project which is still in progress, we continued to have the constant benefit of Dr. Woolner's valuable consultation and support. His *extempore* Presidential Address to the Seventh All-India Oriental Conference (Vedic Section), held at Baroda in 1933 was briefly recorded in the Proceedings and Transactions of that Session of the Conference (pages 3 and 4). Out of a total of 61 lines of this record, as many as 27 gave an account of our aforesaid project in the following words :—

"A more detailed description was then given of a monumental Vedic Dictionary—*Vaidika-Sábdártha-Párijata* being prepared by Pandit Vishvabandhu of the Vishveshvaranand Research Institute, Vedic Ashram, Lahore. Each article of this Dictionary gives :— (1) Derivation and Etymology, (2) Complete record of citations with references, (3) The various interpretations, classified and reviewed.

"The first fasciculus with the Introduction and 84 articles was published in 1929. It was well received and appreciated by many scholars. The work has been continued during the last three years, and about 500 articles are now ready. Publication has been delayed, partly, in order to profit by a number of suggestions made by scholars with

reference to the first instalment and, partly, on account of the attention being given to the work of indexing. This indexing is considered to be a necessary ancillary to the dictionary. A complete word index is being prepared of all Vedic literature comprising the *Saṁhitās*, *Brāhmaṇas* and *Āraṇyakas* *Upaniṣads* and *Sūtras*. Of this *Vaidika-Padānu-Krama Koṣa* the Second Volume comprising the entire vocabulary of the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Āraṇyakas* has been prepared and is being printed. Three other volumes remain to be completed. Every entry has been textually checked, classified, grammatically analysed and arranged under its proper radical and (from accented texts) properly accented. Often there are critical notes on the reading or accent.

"Pt. Vishvabandhu has been carrying on this work with about a dozen assistants, generally, his old pupils, with very limited financial resources. He makes an earnest appeal for further assistance."

That great benefactor of the Institute kept up in his loving heart the same deep and zealous interest in the progress of its work, literally, up to the end of his noble activity on this earth. For, so did it come to pass that the last thing written in his hand was a personal note written on the 17 December, 1935, addressed to Sir George Anderson, then Education Commissioner with the Government of India, pressing for the Institute being favoured with a grant-in-aid of Rs. 50,000/- towards its aforesaid Vedic Lexicographical Project. That very day he was overtaken by the illness from which, alas, he could not recover. How pathetic but, also, how wonderful, indeed !

Mrs. Woolner cherished exactly the same noble sentiments and high ideals as her husband did. Therefore, when the present writer exercised the privilege of suggesting to her the aforesaid epitaph, she at once appreciated the idea and agreed to it. A Vedic text covering the last remains of a Christian was to be for all time a unique cultural testament declaring the fundamental harmony of the human heart. When generations pass and the conception of essential unity

of all the faiths that can uphold the man in us all, supplies the common basis for all human action, this event might receive its legitimate recognition as a very significant fore-runner of the coming manifestations on the canvas of Universal human culture. For obvious reasons, however, the denominational and imperial setting of the time would not permit anything like this taking place. So, there was bitter opposition from the high official circles to the proposal. But Mrs. Woolner was adamant. She had taken a position from which she would not budge an inch. In the end, they did as she wished, thereby enriching the world with a cultural monument, replete with great significance for the coming generations and a high potential for developing into a place of universal pilgrimage.

Two years later, in the course of a special talk I had with her, she took me into her perfect confidence regarding her intended Will. Thereafter, she went back to England and from there told me in her letter of July 17, 1939, "I have been staying in Suffolk with old friends there, also visiting my Lawyers, seeing everything was in order. Sanskrit Research and your Institute will benefit at my death and further, eventually."

Giving expression to her great love for India, she wrote to me in her letter of July 9, 1942, "If you can, in your beautiful philosophy, advise me how I can best comfort myself when I cannot rise above such a selfish depression, I shall indeed welcome it... All you said to me before I left Lahore, is ever in my memory, I prize it exceedingly and all your letters I guard and value ... how deeply I admire the splendid way in which you continue to carry on your noble work"... (and continued, quite prophetically) "Yes, I feel sure your reward is awaiting you. My love for India is so deep, and with all my heart, I trust the issue of this world chaos will work for India's great and lasting benefit." And, in her letter of November 8, 1943, being the last one that I could have from her, she said, "How I wish I could see and talk with you, would be able to settle many problems that are now disturbing

my mind ... A few minutes' talk with you will be consoling. Your wise and great help through those days is a continual support and I feel indeed grateful to have such a true Indian friend." Obviously, her relative, Thompson correctly observed in his letter of March 9, 1944, "Her heart and all her thoughts were in India ... it is most unlikely that she would have been satisfied to settle down here after the war."

### *3. The Dedication*

It is to the ever sacred memory of these both noble specimens of humanity and loving benefactors of our Institute that as decided by our Management, a new series of research works, being ushered with the present volume comprising a topical monograph relating to the British period of Indian history, is most reverently and gratefully dedicated. This Mary Emely Woolner and Alfred Cooper Woolner Indological Series or, simply, Woolner Indological Series will incorporate works of research interest pertaining to all aspects of Indology, namely, studies in and text-editions of Indian languages, literatures, religions, philosophy, history, arts, and sciences and other allied disciplines. Hallowed be for ever both the noble names which this series now goes forth to commemorate !

Most respectfully subscribed.

V. V. R. INSTITUTE,  
SADHU ASHRAM, HOSHIARPUR,  
November 6, 1960.

VISHVA BANDHU

## Preface

MANY BOOKS have been written on the life of Warren Hastings and his achievements in India. This small monograph, of course, deals with his foreign relations only. In these pages I have made an attempt to give his foreign policy in an impartial manner. He may be accused of extending British imperialism in this country and following a forward policy. But he did everything in the interests of his mother country. He was the saviour of the British position in India and protector of British imperialism when the Company was surrounded by unsurmountable difficulties and at the verge of political and economic collapse. So, he was patriotic to the very core of his heart from the British point of view and a ruthless imperialist from our point of view. His entire policy was permeated with two objectives only and these were—to relieve the distress of the company and pay off their heavy debts in England and to enlarge the political influence of the company without enlarging their territory or dividing their military strength. It was he who cemented the foundations of the British empire in India laid down by Lord Clive.

The monograph has been divided into eight chapters, each depicting the march of events with Hastings' career. The list of authorities I have consulted has been appended at the end. In the end I express my sincere thanks to Acharya Vishva Bandhu Ji who agreed to publish this monograph on behalf of the Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute. I am also grateful to Prof. Jaychandra Vidyalankar of the Institute who gave me guidance in completing this monograph.

D. A.-V. COLLEGE,

HOSHIARPUR.

26th September, 1960

RAM PRAKASH SHARMA

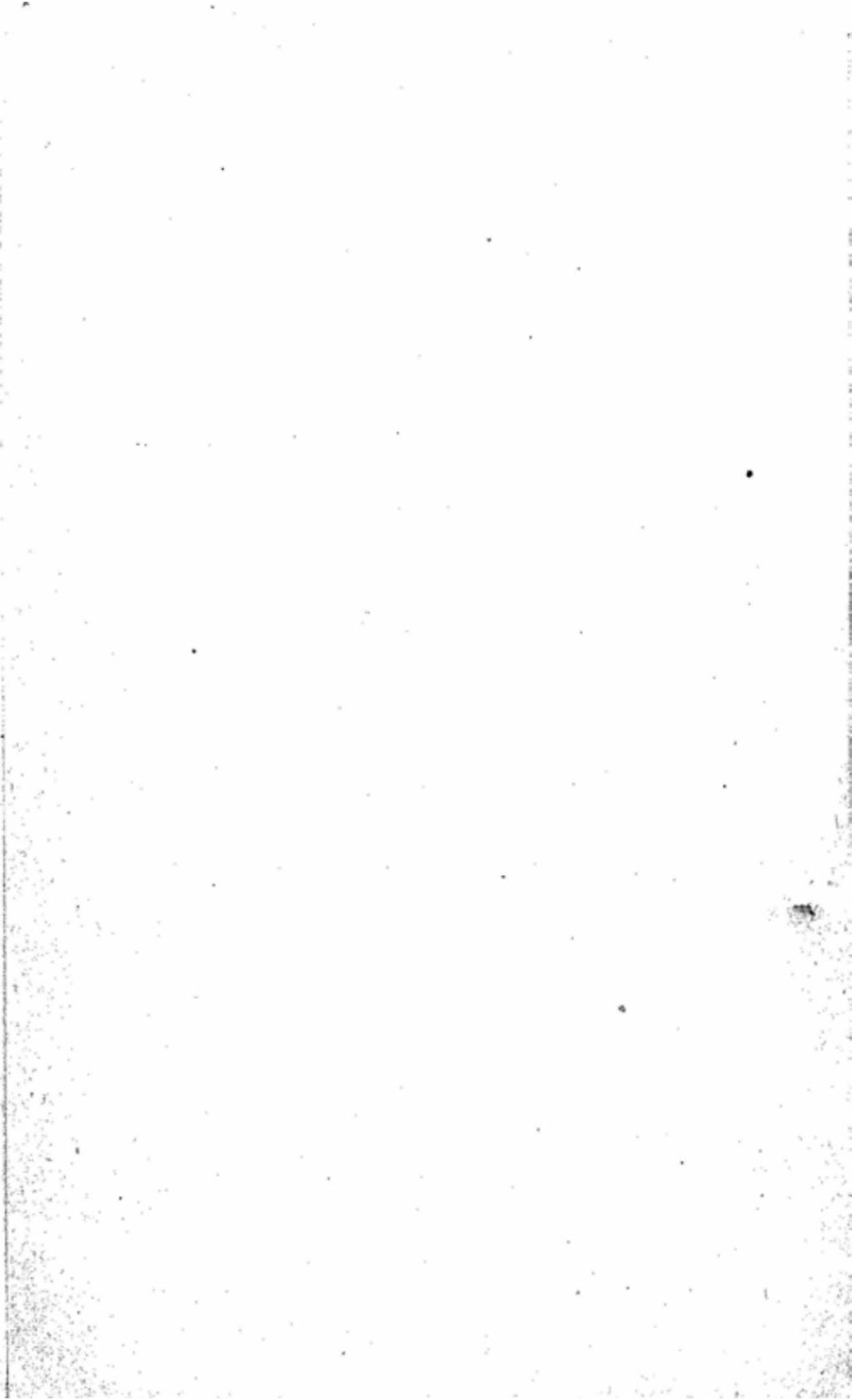
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The Foreign Policy  
OF  
Warren Hastings

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## Chapter I

### Hastings and the Mughal Emperor

HAVING reduced to comparative order the judicial and financial affairs of the Company and establishing peace and order in the Bengal province, Hastings proceeded next to consider the state of its foreign relations. With the exception of the King, Shah Alum, and Shuja-ud-daulah, the Nawab of Oudh, there was not a crowned head throughout the length and breadth of India, with whom the Bengal Government maintained any settled communications. Mr. Hastings's first object, of course, was to place himself and his Government in a just light towards the powers with which they were already connected. They were the Mughal Emperor Shah Alum and Nawab Vizier of Oudh, Shuja-ud-daulah.

To understand Hastings's policy towards the Mughal Emperor, some knowledge of the relations between Clive and the Emperor is necessary. Munro's victory at Buxar, on 23 October, 1764, over the combined forces of Shuja-ud-daulah and Mir Qasim, shattered the military strength of the only power which could prove a serious menace to the Company's possessions. This brilliant victory greatly enhanced the British prestige. Immediately after Buxar, Shah Alum threw himself upon the protection of the English Company. Oudh was now at the disposal of the English Company, as it was a conquered territory. The authorities in Bengal decided to reinstate the Nawab of Oudh, provided he ceded Benaras to the Company and surrendered both Mir Qasim and Samru.

He refused to accept the verdict of Buxar. This led to a futile attempt by Shuja-ud-daulah in conjunction with his Rohilla and Maratha allies to reverse the decision of Buxar. In this attempt he was unsuccessful, and it was only when the Marathas had been driven out of Kora that Shuja-ud-daulah realizing his position, surrendered to the English. The treaty of Allahabad was concluded on 16 August, 1765. This treaty is known by the name of Clive's Settlement. By the treaty of Allahabad, Shuja-ud-daulah was formally reinstated in his sovereignty of Oudh. Even the zimindari of Benaras was given back to him, with this undertaking that Bulwant Singh should continue at its head; and that his regular payments should not exceed the amount for which he had heretofore been liable. The Company also entered into defensive alliance with the restored ruler of Oudh. Meanwhile that the King who was now under the Company's protection, might not go without his advantages also, to him the provinces of Kora, Currah and Allahabad were made over as a royal domesne for the support of his dignity and expenses. It was an act of benevolence on the part of the Company. Finally in return for the firman which conferred upon the English the Diwani, the right of collecting the revenues, over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Lord Clive undertook to pay as tribute to the King the annual sum of twenty-six lakhs of rupees.

Clive's political settlement aimed at the creation of Oudh into a buffer state. It is true that he recognized Shah Alum as Emperor and promised to pay him an annual tribute of twenty-six lakhs of rupees from the revenues of Bengal. But the very fact that he had to grant him Kora and Allahabad for the up-keep of his dignity and royal expenses is clear proof that Shah Alum possessed no real power. He was merely a puppet dependent upon a Company of English merchant adventurers. He was their own creation, and besides the English no power admitted his any authority. He was merely a figure-head representing the Indian royal house and wielding no power of what-so-ever kind. The weakness of Clive's settlement from a military point of view was the

handing over of Kora and Allahabad to the Emperor. It would have been better, if from the beginning these districts had been restored to Shuja-ud-daulah.

Immediately after Clive's return to England, financial and administrative confusion prevailed in the affairs of the Company. Tribute was being paid to the Mughal Emperor while the Company had lack of money and money was also spent in the forms of pensions, compensations to the Oriental potentates. The maintenance of a large standing army for the defence of newly acquired possessions constituted a serious drain on the Company's financial resources. The currency was in a state of utter confusion and there was an insufficient quantity of coin. Moreover in January 1771 the Marathas invaded the Doab and captured Etawah which at that time was held by the son of Hafiz Rahmat Khan, the chief Rohilla leader. In the following month they captured Delhi, and contrary to the advice of the English, the Emperor accepted their invitation to proceed to Delhi, arriving there in December 1771, where he was crowned the Emperor of India by the Marathas. This was the state of affairs when Hastings succeeded Cartier as President of the Bengal Council in April 1772.

Now the Great Mughal who had only become a tool in the hands of the Marathas, was compelled to transfer the provinces of Kora and Allahabad to them given to him by the English. Hastings saw that the presence of these marauders at the gate was a grave and menacing danger. Peace and prosperity in the English territory were impossibility. Therefore Hastings, when he became Governor of Bengal in 1772, immediately determined to pay no more tribute to a sovereign who was incapable of affording to English frontier protection. He also determined to restore the provinces of Kora and Allahabad to the Vizier of Oudh from whom they had been taken by Clive. Hastings's chief reason for this was that Shah Alum had deserted the Company for the Marathas. To have continued this tribute and allowed him the revenues of these two provinces would have meant increasing the

strength of the Company's enemies. Moreover Hastings refused to believe that the Company's rights in India were based upon the Grants of an impotent Emperor who was merely an "idle pageant" and an "idol of the English creation." James Mill writes about the disposal of Kora and Allahabad<sup>1</sup> "the choice lay between preserving them for the Emperor, and making them over to the Vizier." The choice was not between preserving them for the Emperor and making them over to the Vizier, but between allowing them to remain in the hands of the Marathas or restoring them to the Vizier to whom they once belonged. The Emperor's right to them was purely titular, the same right which he possessed over the whole Kingdom of Oudh, and this titular right he owed to the English. Inspite of the advice of the Council who warned him of the danger of such a movement, the Emperor threw himself into the arms of the Marathas and was by them installed on the throne of Delhi. But whether this act was voluntary or involuntary, the possession of the provinces by the Marathas was incompatible with the safety of the English dominion. To combine the forces of the Rohillas, the Emperor and the Vizier against the Marathas was an impossibility. All were jealous of the growing power of the English. The Emperor was now an instrument in the hands of the Marathas. An alliance between them and the Rohillas had already once been concluded, and negotiations were on foot for an alliance between them and the Vizier. All that Hastings could do was to make the alliance between the Vizier and the English as stable as possible, and it could only be made stable by making the power of the Vizier entirely dependent on English bayonets. The plea put forward by Mill<sup>2</sup> that the Emperor deserved some generous treatment on account of his having bestowed on the English the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, is met by the following remarks of Hastings.

1. History of India by James Mill.

2. History of India by James Mill.

"Whatever<sup>1</sup> policy suggested the first idea of the tribute, and whatever title he may be conceived to have had to the payment of it while he remained under our protection and united his fortune with ours, his late conduct has forfeited every claim to it, and made it even dangerous to allow it..... they gave him all. They received nothing from him, but a presumptuous gift of what they had already acquired by their own power, the same power to which he was indebted for his crown, and even for his existence."

Every payment now made to the King was a payment made to the Marathas, in whose he had been a mere tool which they wielded without scruple to their own cause. Moreover the King had exhibited a disposition the reverse of friendly to the Company. In the first place his attempt through Major Morrison, to open a direct communication with the Crown of England could not be acceptable to the Court of Directors, or to the local authorities. It was clear therefore to Hastings that the time had come for dealing with the Mughal as with a shadow, about whom he wrote. "of<sup>2</sup> all the powers. of Indostan, the English alone have really acknowledged the King's authority ; they invested him with the royalty he now possesses ; they conquered for him and gave him a territory : they paid him an annual tribute ... while the trade and revenue of their own provinces suffered visible decay.....yet because we suspended the payment of this tribute, when the provinces of Bengal and Bihar had lost nearly one half of their inhabitants by the mortality of 1770, and the survivors in many parts were unable to pay their rents by the want of purchasers and of money to purchase the produce of their harvests, and when had made himself an instrument of the Marathas who threatened the dominions of our ally and our own with their devastations ;

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1. G. W. Forrest. selections from the state papers of the Governor General of India Vol. I.

2. The Rev. G. R. Gleig. Memoirs of the life of the Right Hon. Warren Hastings. Vol. I, Hastings's letter to Sir Genge Cole-brook, 14th Jan. 1773.

such was the infatuation of this ill-advised man, that, regardless of all the bounties which he had received from the only power which had treated him with the least degree of kindness, he considered himself as robbed of his right, and as a retribution to his benefactors, or as a resource for his own wants, he formed the project of making a tender of their property to the King their Sovereign on the condition of the like pecuniary homage as the Company has hitherto paid him, and the little less expensive vassalage of military service. With these insolent and incendiary propositions is Major Morrison said to be charged, and now preparing for England."

The King's demand for the arrear of tribute was rejected and it was plainly announced to him, that in future he must not look to the Company for any annual payment whatever. The districts of Kora and Allahabad were also retained by the Company, as Hastings and his colleagues came equally to the conclusion that though they might be willing to maintain the King in his Sovereignty, they were not bound to sanction the establishment there of a people avowdly hostile. As the districts were far-removed from the Company's possessions, the idea was suggested by Hastings to sell them to the Vizier and they were finally sold to him by the treaty of Benaras.

Now we come to the second phase of Hastings's policy towards Shah Alum. During the summer of 1776 it was rumoured that a league had been formed by the Emperor, the Marathas, the Sikhs and the Rohillas to invade Oudh at the end of the rainy season. He therefore urged the necessity of forming an alliance with Najaf Khan, a military adventurer. Although Najaf Khan was to join the Company against the Marathas, he was not to expect military aid from the Company. After the death of Najaf Khan in 1782 Hastings judged it expedient to have a representative at the Court of Mughal Emperor and selected Major James Brown for this purpose. His first task was to ascertain the true state of affairs at Delhi, and to report on the condition and political relations of the various powers in the neighbourhood of Delhi. Above all he was to avoid discussions of the Emperor's

ancient claims to the tribute or to the districts of Kora and Allahabad. Lastly he was to keep a watchful eye on any foreign agents at Delhi. The whole problem of the Company's relations with the Mughal Emperor was placed on a different basis by the complications which followed the flight from Delhi of Mirza Jawan Bakht, the eldest son of Shah Alum. On Shah Alum's request Hastings wrote to his son to return to Delhi and he did so. The Mughal Emperor had so lowered his prestige that the Mughal dynasty was on the verge of extinction. Hastings feared the rise of an adventurer powerful enough to unite all the powers of Hindostan against the Company. He therefore deemed it advisable to afford shelter to the prince, who as the Emperor's heir would probably in the future prove a useful ally to the Company.

It seems that the whole idea underlying Hastings's later policy was to win back the Mughal Emperor as an ally or to make him a puppet in the hands of the Company instead of in the hands of the enemies.

## Chapter II

### Hastings and Oudh Affairs

To UNDERSTAND Hastings's policy towards Shuja-ud-daulah, the Nawab Vizier of Oudh, some knowledge of previous history of Oudh in Clive's time is essential. Shuja-ud-daulah was the first ruler of Oudh who came into contact with the rising power of the East India Company. During Clive's absence in England Mir Qasim, the puppet Nawab of Bengal, after perpetrating the horrible massacre of Patna, fled into the dominions of Shuja-ud-daulah, who openly espoused his cause. This action of the ruler of Oudh could not be tolerated by the English and it was decided to take the offensive. Munro's brilliant victory at Buxar, on 23 October 1764 over the combined forces of Shuja-ud-daulah and Mir Qasim broke into pieces the military strength of Oudh. Now Oudh was at the disposal of the English. The Bengal authorities decided to reinstate the Nawab in Oudh, provided he ceded Benaras to the Company and surrendered Mir Qasim and Samru. He refused to accept it and made a futile attempt with the help of the Marathas to reverse the decision of Buxar. The treaty of Allahabad was concluded on 16 August, 1765. Oudh was restored to Shuja-ud-daulah with the exception of Kora and Allahabad which were handed over to the Emperor. Bulwant Singh was to be maintained in the Zimidari of Benaras and Ghazipur. Further the Vizier was to allow the Company to carry on a trade free from any duty throughout the country. He was to pay an indemnity of

fifty-five lakhs of rupees. Finally the Company entered into a defensive alliance with the Vizier by which he was to surrender Mir Qasim and Samru to the English and not to grant asylum to any European deserter. The alliance was purely defensive, the Company promising to assist him in any war waged for the defence of his dominions, but help could only be afforded in so far as it would be consistent with the security of their own territories. This treaty was the germ of all subsidiary alliances with Oudh, for the extraordinary expenses of all troops supplied by the Company were to be defrayed by Shuja-ud-daulah himself. Hastings's first act was to alter this arrangement. The Clive's foreign policy did provide the Company with a friendly buffer state against any attack from Marathas. Soon after sometime far more serious became the military preparations and political intrigues of Shuja-ud-daulah himself than any foreign invader. He had drilled and disciplined his infantry on the European model. This was a great menace to the Company.

After Clive's return the Company's policy too remained to transform Oudh into a buffer state to possess powers of intermediate resistance. It was never intended that he should become so powerful as to render his state a menace instead of a bulwark of defence. This alarm led to a fresh treaty, when on 29 Nov. 1768 the Vizier agreed to limit his troops to 35,000. One of the first actions of Hastings was to reverse this policy. His policy towards the ruler of Oudh was to strengthen him and give him armed support as to build up firm bulwork against the Marathas. His policy was purely defensive.

At this time the conduct of relations with the ruler of Oudh was largely in the hands of military. Barker was a consistent advocate of the wisdom of an alliance between Shuja-ud-daulah and the Rohillas. On June 17, 1772 an offensive and defensive alliance was concluded in the presence of Barker between the Rohillas and the Vizier, agreeing that, if the Marathas repeated their attempts on the Rohilla country the Vizier should aid the Rohillas in expelling the common enemy, in return for which he was to receive forty

lakhs of rupees from them. Early in 1773 the Marathas marched in force to Ramghat. Encountering no opposition they crossed the Ganges into Rohilkhand. Now the Vizier was to expel them under the treaty. So the Nawab's forces with the English brigade early in march entered Rohilkhand and moved towards Ramghat. The Marathas disappeared quickly at the appearance of the English and Vizier's forces.

Now Hastings made up his mind to pay a visit to Shuja-ud-daulah. In a letter to Laurence he gave out the reason for this visit<sup>1</sup> "The loose manner in which our concerns with the Vizier were conducted, and the great expense which attended every movement of our army for this service, first suggested the expediency of an interview with him....A new subject presented itself (the Rohilla)- the correspondence upon this subject introduced the proposal of a meeting between us". On June 24, 1773 Hastings left Calcutta for Benaras where it was arranged he should have an interview with the Vizier of Oudh. He was accompanied by Vansittart and Lambert. Before his departure he had got letters from the Vizier complaining of the treachery and breach of faith of the Rohilla chiefs, and expressing a desire to invade and conquer their country. The shortcomings of the treaty of Allahabad and the inadequacy of Clive's policy towards Oudh were the chief reasons which prompted Hastings to pay a visit to Shuja-ud-daulah. He wished to draw up a fresh agreement by which the alliance would be made more profitable to the Company. The existing arrangement was a severe drain on the Company's financial resources. Moreover the Vizier too liked to enter into a fresh alliance. He needed English troops to defend Oudh against Maratha encroachments. At Benaras Hastings and the Vizier met in a conference, and after much discussion on September 7, 1773 a treaty was formed with Shuja-ud-daulah. The results of the conference were these.

- (i) Kora and Allahabad were sold to Shuja-ud-daulah

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1. Memoirs of Warren Hastings by Gleig, Vol. I, letter from Hastings to Laurence Sullivan, 12 October, 1773.

for 50 lakhs of rupees, twenty lakhs to be paid in ready money and thirty lakhs in two instalments.

(ii) The Vizier was to pay for the use of the Company troops when required at the rate of 210,000 per mensem for a brigade. The Company were also to pay for the use of Vizier's forces if the necessity arose.

(iii) The Nawab agreed to receive a person of trust from Hastings to reside near his person.

(iv) By a special agreement Chait Singh was confirmed in his father's Zimindari. This was not included in the treaty.

(v) By a verbal agreement Hastings agreed to assist Shuja-ud-daulah against the Rohillas.

(vi) The Company were to cease paying tribute to Shah-Alum.

The sale of Kora and Allahabad formed the subject of the second of the charges against Hastings. Hastings wrote about it. "By<sup>1</sup> the cession of Cora, and c, the Company is freed from the intolerable burden of defending that country for the King, and they acquire a vast sum of money for parting with what they could not have kept, a reasonable supply to the deficient circulation of Bengal and to the public treasury."

The treaty of Benaras was a reversal of Clive's policy. The treaty was confirmed by the Company. The question of Rohilla expedition raised in the conference, was once more postponed on the word of the Vizier. The Vizier was also to give 40 lakhs of rupees to the British when the expedition was successfully finished excluding the payment of the brigade.

Hastings was both surprised and mortified to receive shortly after his return to Calcutta, a letter from the Nawab proposing to attack Hafiz-Rahmat Khan and asking for the English help to lead the expedition against the Rohillas who had refused to pay him 40 lakhs according to their agreement

1. Memoirs of Warren Hastings by Gleig, Vol. I. Letter to Sir George Colebrook from Hastings, 12 October, 1773.

and who were now going to take possession of Etawah. The Nawab also made known to Hastings the Benaras undertaking. The Select Committee agreed to support the Vizier. Hastings wrote a letter to the Vizier that he stood by the agreement. Hastings wrote about the advantages of the expedition. "Our<sup>1</sup> ally would obtain by this acquisition a complete compact state shut in effectually from foreign invasions by the Ganges, all the way from the frontier of Bihar to the mountains of Tibet, while he would remain equally accessible to our forces from the above provinces either for hostilities or protection. It would give him wealth, of which we should partake, and give him security without any dangerous increase of power. It would undoubtedly, by bringing his frontier nearer to the Marathas, to whom singly he would be no match, render him more dependent on us and cement the union more firmly between us." On the 14th of February orders were issued to Col Champion to take command of the Brigade marching to Oudh. On the 24th of February the united forces entered the territory of the Vizier and on the 17th of April they invaded the Rohilla dominions. On the 9th of May Hastings announced the news of the victory. In a letter to Col Champion he wrote. "I<sup>2</sup> repeat my congratulations to you on the consequences of your victory, which had completely reduced the Rohilla country." The end of war coincides with the end of Hastings's administration as Governor of Bengal.

The passing of Regulating Act in 1773 made Hastings's position precarious. By it the Governor of Bengal was transferred into the Governor General of Bengal, and he was to be assisted by a Council of four deciding by a majority vote. Of the 4 members only Richard Barwell was Hastings's supporter. The other three Clavering, Monson and Francis formed the hostile majority. So now the hostile majority rule followed. On the very sitting in the Chamber they began to attack Hastings's foreign policy. They denounced

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1. Select Committee Proceedings 26th Nov., 1773. Vol. I  
Page 80.

2. Memoirs of Warren Hasting by Gleig, Vol. I, Letter to Col.  
Champion from Hastings, 21st May, 1774.

the Rohilla War. One of the earliest decisions taken by the majority was to recall Middleton from the Court of Shuja-ud-daulah. Middleton's work at the court was to arrange for a speedy settlement of any outstanding debts. It was his duty to study the character of the Vizier and gain his confidence. He was to see that Chait Singh was protected against any illegal exactions. He was to serve the communication channel between the Commander-in-Chief and the Vizier.

On 26th October 1774, in accordance with their policy of obstruction, the majority forced Hastings to recall Middleton and on December 28, 1774 Bristow was appointed Resident. Although the majority denounced the Rohilla War, they made a demand for the 40 lakhs due from the Vizier. Refusal to comply with this demand was to be followed by the withdrawal of the Company's troops from Oudh. Even if he agreed to pay, the brigade was still to be recalled, unless required for the defence of Oudh, Kora and Allahabad. Hastings criticized these proposals severely. Towards the end of the year 1774 Shuja-ud-daulah fell seriously ill and he commended his son Asaf-ud-daulah to the care and protection of the English. His death early in 1775 removed one of the ablest rulers that ever sat on the throne of Oudh. His only legitimate son was Mirza Amani who virtually succeeded him with the title of Asaf-ud-daulah. The Nawab while commencing his family to the protection of Hastings said, "If my days are near to a conclusion, God's will be done. I depend on your friendship that after my decease, considering my dear son Asaf-ud-daulah in my place. You will afford him your assistance and on every occasion act for his benefit and advantage."

The majority of the council considered all the treaties made with the Nawab Shuja-ud-daulah as purely personal, and consequently invalid on the death of one of the contracting parties. They therefore determined to make a heavier bargain with the Vizier's successor. It was<sup>1</sup> "resolved that the Board will agree to guarantee to the Nawab Mirza Amaunay the

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1. Secret Select Committee Proceedings, Vol. II, P. 262-263.

province of Oudh and conditionally those of Kora and Allahabad until the pleasure of the Court of Directors on the treaty of Benares be known." The Court of Directors upheld the decision of Hastings in this connection. Finally it was not until 22 May, 1775 that Bristow was able to report the final settlement of the treaty. This treaty which took the form of defensive alliance, established, universal peace, firm friendship and perfect union between Asaf-ud-daulah and the English Company. The Company guaranteed Asaf-ud-daulah in the possession of the province of Oudh and until the pleasure of the Court of Directors was known, in the possession of Kora and Allahabad. The Nawab ceded to the Company in full sovereignty all the territories dependent on Raja Chait Singh together with the Mint and Kotwali of Benares. The subsidy of a brigade was raised to 260,000 rupees. Hastings's policy towards Oudh was reversed by the majority. The majority also backed up their Resident at Lucknow in up-holding the claims of Bhow Begam late Vizier's widow. In April, 1775 the Vizier had a pitched battle with his refractory battalions, his mother refused all help. The Nawab's affairs fell, as the Resident reported, into a most distracted condition and all the steps taken by the council majority went straight against the policy of strengthening the state of Oudh. In regard to foreign affairs the policy of the council majority towards the Vizier of Oudh had proved ruinous to their ally.

The new Nawab was a puppet in the hands of his minister Murtaza Khan. Asaf-ud-daulah experienced the difficulty in enforcing his authority, for the greater part of his lands was in the hands of Zimindars. Moreover the mutinous spirit of the army further showed the weakness of the ruler. The worst defect of all was the lack of discipline in the army. British assistance was called forth one time to suppress their revolt. Bristow wrote to Francis in a private letter, "I cannot explain to you how necessary the establishment will be to the Nawab's existence for both he and his minister are galloping past to their ruin...indeed the Nawab and Murtaza Khan rendered themselves and the whole country incapable of

business by getting drunk like beasts. We have no money in the treasury."

Towards the end of 1776 Hastings once more commanded the majority by his casting vote because of the death of Monson in September 1776. He at once turned out Bristow from the post of Resident at the court of Oudh and reinstated Middleton his own original nominee. Middleton received the usual instructions to strive to cement the alliance between the Company and the Nawab, to report on the political condition of the neighbouring powers, to recover from Asaf-ud-daulah the money still owing to the Company and to insist on the regular payment of the monthly subsidy for the English brigade. Chandler and Bathurst were appointed his assistants. The revenues were in arrears throughout the country. Middleton therefore proposed that Asaf-ud-daulah should be asked to regulate his expenses either by a reform in the military establishment or a retrenchment in his civil disbursements so as to bring them more upon a footing with his probable income.

The immediate measure passed by Hastings was the transfer of the disciplined troops maintained under treaty by the Nawab of Oudh to the service of the Company, who undertook to pay and command them in exchange for an assignment of land revenue equal to their cost. It was the beginning of the organization of Subsidiary forces which played an important part in the Indian History. Hastings passed this measure in the teeth of strong opposition only by a casting vote. He over-ruled all objections of his opponents. Asaf-ud-daulah gave his assent to this proposal. About this time it became inevitable to take drastic steps to intervene in the internal affairs of Oudh, as the lives of Asaf-ud-daulah's ministers Hasan Riza Khan and Haider Beg were in danger. On Hastings's writing the Nawab Vizier dismissed Imam Baksh from his Court, and entrusted Riza Khan with the administration of his affairs. In the same month Middleton reported that he could not be really held responsible for the balance owing to the Company so long as the money for this purpose was collected by means of the tankhwah (assignment).

system. He begged to be empowered (by the Board) to demand from the Nawab exclusive assignments of the total revenues of certain provinces, the amils to be under his control, free of any interference on part of the Nawab's officials. All revenues were to be paid into Middleton's hands. Neither were the troops stationed in these areas for the protection of the amils to be dismissed without Middleton's consent. The Board approved of it, and the Nawab agreed to assign the revenues of the Doab, Rohilkhand exclusively to the payment of the Company's demands. In addition the districts of Allahabad, Kora, Shahrah and Jagdispur were to be assigned in a similar manner. He also handed over to Middleton 3 battalions to assist the amils. Middleton was made thus the uncrowned king of Oudh in the language of Francis. Middleton also advocated the destruction of all forts possessed by the zimindars in the Doab. Another abuse came to light. The Nawab was also in the hands of European creditors. The Board looked upon it as a grave irregularity. Towards the end of 1779 the Nawab's request to recall the British forces except Permanent brigade because of the heavy expenses, was refused by Hastings. It was after great pressure had been put on him that the Vizier gave his consent to the assignments necessary for the up-keep of the Temporary brigade. Francis held that the condition of Oudh was produced by the burden of having to provide payment of these troops; Hastings believed the origins of the disorders in Oudh and of the wastage of the revenues was to be found in the Nawab himself, not so much in his capacity as in his deplorable choice of ministers. This was in January 1780. In the following year the wretched condition of Oudh and the entreaties of its ruler forced Hastings to visit Lucknow for the purpose of restoring order and to form arrangements with Chait Singh for the better Government of his zimindari. "Lucknow<sup>1</sup>" was sink of iniquity. It was the school of rapacity. What will you say of... ...a city filled with as many independent and absolute sovereignities as there

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1. Letter from Hastings to Sir John Macpherson, 12th December, 1781. *Memories of Warren Hastings Gleig.*

are Englishmen in it." It was essential for Hastings to proceed to Oudh to create order out of chaos. It was also hoped that he would be able to form an alliance with Mudaji Bhonsla of Berar for the mutual defence of Berar and Bengal.

The result of Hastings's visit to Oudh was the treaty of Chunar signed on 19th September 1781. To relieve the Nawab's finances all troops were to be withdrawn from Oudh with the exception of the permanent brigade and one regiment of sepoys for the Resident. The Nawab was permitted to resume the jagirs of the jagirdars, with the reservation that pensions equivalent to the annual collections from their lands should be granted in compensation to any jagirdars whose established been guaranteed by the Company.

The Nawab was further authorized to resume the lands of Faizullah Khan, the Rohilla leader who had broken his treaty engagements and forfeited his right to the protection of the Company. The Resident was to be recalled from Farrukhabad. The Nawab agreed to reduce his sihbandi troops to regular establishments to be paid in money from the treasury and not by assignments of revenue. The Nawab also separated his public and private funds on Hastings's advice. All public funds were to be under management of his ministers and subject to inspection by the Resident.

The execution of the Chunar agreement was entrusted to Middleton. He was to relieve the Nawab's financial burdens and to provide for the better administration of Oudh. Hastings was disappointed in his choice of a Resident. On 11th February, 1782 Middleton wrote to Hastings claiming that the Nawab of Oudh had fulfilled all the conditions of the Chunar agreement. Hastings was convinced that Middleton had not carried out his instructions in full. He threatened to recall him if he failed to discharge the Company's debts due from the Nawab by the close of the year. He was charged also with attempting to conceal from the Board the rebellion and flight of Almas Ali Khan, and his neglect to inform the unrest among the Nawab's amils. He was also guilty of anticipating the revenues of Oudh and of burdening them

with an enormous load of interest by mortgaging assignments to shroffs at 21 per mensem. He was finally recalled.

In September 1782 Bristow was appointed the Resident. His first task was to make certain that the Nawab discharged all his debts to the Company. He was to report on the Government of Oudh, the distribution of his forces, measure taken for internal peace, the revenues, the character of chief amils and the attitude of zimindars to the Central Government. About the Resident's position Hastings wrote to him, "There<sup>1</sup> can be no medium in the relation between the Resident and the minister, but either the Resident must be the slave and vassal of the minister, or the minister at the absolute devotion of the Resident." Bristow received definite instructions from Hastings to control the minister. To check the power of Haider Beg and for the better administration of Oudh Hastings proposed for the creation of a Central Department responsible for the collection of revenues, a Central treasury and Courts of justices. He was to ensure the loyalty of Zimindars to the Central Government. He was also to see how far the reform of separation of funds was carried out.

Bristow found the Government of Oudh an inefficient despotism with arbitrary powers in the Provincial officials than in the Nawab himself. Amils reigned supreme in the districts. "Murders, thefts, and other enormities shocking to the humanity are committed in open day." Wrote Bristow.

On April 21, 1783 Hastings placed before the Board complaints of the conduct of Bristow by the Nawab and Haidar Beg. He assumed absolute power in Oudh, had taken charge of all public accounts, dismissing and appointing the amils and had assumed the right to inspect and control the Nawab's private expenses. He had disbanded 4,000 horses and 7,000 foot forces without the Nawab's permission. He invested Cooper with the power to hear appeals from the subjects. He used harsh and insulting language in the

1. Warren Hastings, and Oudh by C. C. Davies Chapter  
Bristow the uncrowned King of Oudh.

presence of the Nawab. He had certainly assumed the Nawab's power. Hastings raised the question of recalling him. Hastings was convinced that he had assumed autocratic powers. Bristow remained in Lucknow but no longer the uncrowned King of Oudh. Bristow was unable to collect money due from the Nawab. Finally Hastings agreed to be responsible for the payment of the balance of 53 lakhs, provided the Nawab gave security of trustworthy bankers and the Board agreed to withdraw the Residency. Finally Bristow returned.

On the invitation of the Nawab Hastings left Calcutta on 17 February, 1784 and arrived at Lucknow on the 27 March. His object was to obtain within one year a complete discharge of the arrears and of the rapidly accumulating debt of the Nawab to the Company. More than this he proposed to withdraw all British agents and make the Nawab responsible for his own financial administration without any intervention on the part of the Company. His chief aim was to withdraw all the Company's troops except the permanent brigade, the retention of which was essential for the Nawab. In addition to the scanty revenue collections which has just been completed he received a voluntary gift of 13 lakhs from Almas Ali Khan for the relief of Nawab's debts. Considerable savings were made in the disbursement, both public and private. The Begams and Nawab Solar Jang whose Jagirs had been restored made voluntary gifts. The Nawab's ministers also came to his aid. It was Hastings's final visit to Oudh.

Hastings's policy in Oudh was to control it by supporting ministers on whom he could rely. His policy under Asaf-ud-daulah was to insist on ministers favourable to the British connection. But he was never given free hand in his foreign policy. He was constantly criticized and obstructed by the hostile majority in the Board.

### Chapter III

## The Rohilla War and Warren Hastings

BEFORE we study Hastings's policy towards the Rohillas, it is good to know something of their country and themselves. The situation of the Rohilla country is described thus by Hastings in a letter. "It<sup>1</sup> lies open to the south. It is bounded on the west by the Ganges, and on the North and East by the mountains of Tartary. It is the province of Oudh, in respect both to its geographical and political relation, exactly what Scotland was to England before the reign of Queen Elizabeth". The Rohillas were a nation inhabiting Rohilkhand. Hastings "describes<sup>2</sup> them a tribe of Afghans as Pathans, free-looters, who conquered the country about sixty years ago, who ever since lived up the fruit of it, without contributing either to its cultivation or manufactures or even mixing with the native inhabitants. The Rohillas are Mahometan's, the Natives Hindus, and have only changed masters". Burke speaks of them as the bravest, most honourable and generous nation upon earth. Macaulay writes of them as the finest population in India. Mr.<sup>3</sup> Whiteway gives the number of Afghans in Rohilkhand about forty thousand in a population of about a million Hindus. About the revenues Col Champion stated that he<sup>4</sup> believed the revenues of the

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1. Memoirs of Warren Hastings Vol. I Gleig. Letter to Laurence Sullivan from Hastings 12 Oct, 1773.
2. Forrest Selections Vol. I p. 178.
3. Calcutta Review 1875.
4. Forrest Selections Vol. I p. 171.

whole of Rohilkhand to have been between seventy and eighty lakhs. There is no natural boundary between Oudh and Rohilkhand, the two provinces forming one continuous plain between the Himalayas and the Ganges.

When the Marathas invaded Rohilkhand and plundered and destroyed all before them, the Rohilla chiefs fled into the forests of Terai. The Vizier of Oudh fearing that the Marathas might invade his country, advanced with some English battalions to the borders of Oudh. Negotiations were opened with the Rohilla chiefs regarding the steps to be taken for the expulsion of the Marathas from Rohilkhand. Hafiz Rahmat the Rohilla Sardar paid a visit to the camp of Shuja-ud-daulah and a treaty between the Vizier and himself on the part of Rohilla chiefs was drawn. Sir Robert Barker, the English Commander-in-Chief was an evidence to it, and the treaty was countersigned by him (June, 1772). The Vizier undertook "either by peace or war" to drive the Marathas out of Rohilkhand and to do so again if they again invaded the land after the rainy season. In return the Rohilla leaders promised to pay the Vizier within a little over three years forty lakhs of rupees. The Marathas shortly afterwards withdrew and the Rohillas came out from their mountain fortress. They again occupied their country. The Vizier and Barker returned to Faizabad in Oudh. The Marathas released 400 Rohilla women, the wife and son of Sabita Khan.

The Marathas early in 1773 again moved in force to Ramghat. Now as agreed in the treaty of the previous year, Shuja-ud-daulah was bound to expel the Marathas from Rohilkhand. It was therefore decided that a brigade of English troops should be sent to assist the Nawab in carrying out the stipulation of his treaty of the previous year, and in expelling the Marathas from Rohilkhand. Shuja-ud-daulah made no objection to the conditions proposed to him and Sir Robert Barker with a brigade marched to join the Vizier's army. The Nawab wrote to assure Hafiz Rahmat Khan that he and the English would soon arrive to assist the Rohillas against the Marathas, in fulfilment of the

treaty and invited him to be ready to co-operate actively in the common cause. The combined forces advanced rapidly through Oudh, and early in March 1773 they entered Rohilkhand and moved towards Ramghat. On the 20th of March the English troops were close to Ramghat. The Marathas contented themselves with cannonading the English camp from the high ground on the opposite bank of the Ganges. It now became clear that the Marathas had no intention to risk an encounter with the English, and they made a retreat. During the following months they made, from time to time threatening moves as if they again proposed to cross the Ganges. Acting under the advice of Barker the Vizier did not press for the payment of their debt. On the final departure of the Marathas, the Vizier whose expenses had been great, began to demand payment of the sum due by the Rohillas. Barker urged upon Hafiz Rahmat the necessity of fulfilling his engagements. Not only had the Marathas been expelled from Rohilkhand, but the country had been protected from devastation too. Hafiz Rahmat admitted the liability but nothing could be got from him except general profession and excuses for delay. On May 12, the Vizier army began its march towards Oudh.

All attempts to induce Hafiz Rahmat to carry out his engagements having failed, the Vizier wrote to Hastings for the interview. The proposed interview took place at Benaras on the 19th of August. The conferences regarding Rohilkhand were carried on simultaneously with those regarding Oudh. The result of the discussions was that Hastings while he agreed with the Vizier that nothing short of the annexation of Rohilkhand to Oudh would afford permanent security against the Marathas, said that he was content to leave it to the Vizier to determine whether a joint expedition against the Rohillas should at once be undertaken, or whether it should be postponed. On Vizier's say the expedition was postponed but there was no real change of policy and Hastings gave the Vizier every reason to expect that whenever it could be with prudence resumed, and he desired it, it should be undertaken. Having consented to meet the whole of the actual expenses of the brigade employed in his service, the Vizier offered to pay

forty lakhs if the expedition were successfully carried out. On the 18th of Nov., 1773 a letter was received by Hastings from the Vizier complaining against the Rohillas, showing his intention for the expedition and reminding his promise of 40 lakhs on the expulsion of the Rohillas. Hastings acceded to the Vizier's request.

In November, 1773 the Vizier marched upon Etawah. The Marathas offered no resistance. Then he went to Farraukhabad and induced the Rohilla chief Majaffar Jang to enter into engagements which severed his connection with his country-men in Rohilkhand, and made him virtually dependant upon the Vizier. Zabita Khan was also debarred from meeting Rohilla chief. The Vizier wrote to the Governor General for the agreed help on the 3rd February, 1774. As Barker had resigned, Col. Champion assumed the command of the English forces marching towards Oudh. He was informed that the object of the expedition was the reduction of the Rohilla country, operations were to be strictly confined within the limits of Oudh and of Rohilkhand. The military conduct of the expedition was left entirely in his own hands, to pay strict attention to the behaviour and discipline of the army, to get regular payment of the forces. The British force consisted of one Company of artillery, the second European regiment, the select Picket and the second Brigade composed of six battalions under Col. Gallieg the Vizier's army numbered 100,000. In the beginning of April 1774 the English troops were not far from the Rohilla frontier and the Vizier joined the English at Shahabad. The Vizier sent an envoy to Hafiz Rahmat with a copy of the treaty of 1772 and demanded payment of 40 lakhs on pain of the consequences.

On the 12th April Col. Champion received a letter from Hafiz Rahmat Khan seeking his advice. A reply was sent to him that the only advice he could give was that Hafiz Khan should in all respects conform to the wishes of the Vizier. On the 17th of April the allied forces entered Rohilkhand. Some correspondence again passed between them, the Vizier demanding two crores of rupees and Hafiz Rahmat pleading poverty. In the end Hafiz Rahmat decided to fight. The

two armies met on the 23rd of April 1774 at Miranpur Katra. The Rohillas were reported to be 40,000 strong by Col. Champion. After a gallant resistance the Rohillas were defeated and Hafiz Rahmat was killed. Col. Champion wrote "It is impossible to describe a more obstinate firmness of resolution than the enemy displayed ; numerous were the gallant men who advanced, and often pitched their colours between both armies, in order to encourage their men to follow them." The brunt of the battle fell on the English troops. The Vizier's army remained inactive as Col. Champion complained. Champion reported that Shuja-ud-daulah's troops had taken no part in the actual fighting but had confined their activities to looting the Rohilla country after the victory had been assured. "We have the honour of day and these bandits the profits," wrote Champion.

On the death of Hafiz Rahmat, Faizullah Khan became the acknowledged leader of the Rohillas. He fled with the remains of the army to Rampur and thence taking his family and treasure, retired to Laldhang. Early in May, Col. Champion reported that the whole of the Rohilla country was in the Vizier's possession. The resident was asked to demand an acknowledgement that 40 lakhs had now become due. But the payment was not pressed. Faizullah Khan opened negotiations with Col. Champion and he offered to pay the Company 80 lakhs of rupees in three years if placed in possession of Rohilkhand. This and other proposals were naturally rejected by Shuja-ud-daulah. Hastings also refused to listen to such proposals, as the expedition had been carried out not merely for 40 lakhs of rupees, but for strategic reasons as well. Its chief object had been to provide Oudh with an easily defensible north west frontier. To have sold Rohilkhand to Faizullah Khan would have entirely defeated this intension, and, would, in addition, have been a breach of contract with Shuja-ud-daulah. Eventually Faizullah Khan, realizing the hopelessness of his position, concluded a treaty with Shuja-ud-daulah at Laldhang on 7 Oct. 1774. Rampur and certain other districts with 15 lakhs of revenue were transferred to him. Faizullah

Khan was not to retain more than 5,000 troops in his service and was to expel all other Rohillas from his territory. He was not to correspond with any foreign power except the English and the Vizier. He was to provide the Nawab with two to three thousand troops in war.

No political act of Hastings has been more severely condemned than his share in the Rohilla war. Parliamentary orators had thundered against the brutal extirpation of a whole nation, as if a conqueror had depopulated Rohilkhand, slaying and expelling all the inhabitants or driving them like the ten tribes of Israel into exile and captivity, and utterly annihilating an able and admirable dynasty. "To this man", said Burke, referring to the Vizier and Hastings 'he sold this whole nation whose country was cultivated like a garden—the bravest, most honourable and generous nation upon earth.' Macaulay writes of the Rohillas as an 'injured nation', the finest population in India. Francis and the majority of the Council describe the Rohillas as a 'brave and independent, though from the nature of their constitution, a weak and divided nation.' It was on the 30th November 1774 that the majority wrote to the Court of Directors denouncing the Rohilla war as an act of aggression. His answer to their contention that it was 'contrary to the express, peremptory, and respected orders of the Company, he gave extracts from the records to prove that it was the intention of the Directors to confine their policy to the security of Company's possessions and those of their allies, in certain cases they envisaged the possibility of carrying their arms beyond those bounds. These quotations prove the contention of Hastings "to<sup>1</sup> incline to those few chiefs in Indostan who are in a condition to struggle with the Marathas," "that<sup>2</sup> they regard with a jealous eye the encroaching power of the Marathas." "The line of neutrality is still recommended, but the Board are authorized to depart from it whenever the interests of the Company shall be endangered or shall materially require

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1. General letters 11th May 1769. 30th June 1769 Para I, III.
2. General letter 15th September 1769 para 28.

it."<sup>1</sup> Hastings's reply to the objection that it "exposed the Company to the hazard of an indefinite or endless war with the Marathas" speaks for itself. "No<sup>2</sup> political transaction can be mathematically demonstrated to be totally free from danger, the probable advantages must be weighed against the disadvantages."

The story of the cruel extermination of the Rohillas is absolutely false, nor is there a particle of evidence that any atrocities were committed upon them at any time during the war. Excepting the men who fell in battle, there is no evidence that any Rohilla was put to death, or was treated with any inhumanity. The only Rohillas who were compelled to leave Rohilkhand, other than the principal chiefs, were the soldiers actually under arms with Faizullah Khan. The rest of the Rohillas were unmolested or went into Rampur. Much was made out of the word 'extirpation' by the opponents of Hastings. Hastings wrote in his defence before the House of Commons on the 2nd May 1786, "the extirpation consisted in nothing more than in removing from their offices the Rohillas who had the official management of the country, and from the country the soldiers who had opposed us in the conquest of it." Middleton said before the House of Commons that he knew of no instance of cruelty by Shuja-ud-daulah or by his orders. The Rohilla chiefs were generally treated with consideration and leniency. Two of them only, the sons of Dundi Khan who had broken engagements which they had entered into with the Vizier, were not unjustly, punished with the temporary confinement and confiscation of their property; but they suffered no serious ill-treatment, and they were soon released. The ladies of the families of Hafiz Rahmat and Dundi Khan with their dependents, suffered much distress and inconvenience from the absence of proper arrangement for their comforts and for their maintenance, and their jewels and personal ornaments were taken from them.

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1. General letter to Fort St. George 24th November, 1772 para 10.
2. The Rohilla war minute by Warren Hastings Forest Selection Vol. II.

The stories that they were insulted are grossly false. There never was any Indian war where excesses were not committed. The Rohilla atrocities owe their birth to the malignity of Champion and Francis, their growth to the rhetoric of Burke and their wide diffusion to the brilliancy and pellucid clearness of Macaulay's style. Hastings had always striven to prevent excesses by the soldiery. He had given strict orders to Col. Champion to look to the behaviour and discipline of the army strictly. The Governor General refused to admit the claim of Col. Champion to share in the plunder of the country. He wrote to him, "The<sup>1</sup> very idea of prize-money suggests to my remembrance the former disorders which arose in our army from this source..... It is to be avoided. It is poison." Hastings never sanctioned nor approved of any act of severity on the part of the Nawab to the family of Hafiz Rahmat Khan. He wrote to Middleton the resident at Oudh, "I<sup>2</sup> desire that you will take an immediate occasion to remonstrate with him (the Nawab) against every act of cruelty or wanton violence. The country is his, and the people his subjects. They claim by that relation his tenderest regard and unremitting protection. The family of Hafiz have never injured him, but have a claim to his protection in default of that of which he has deprived them. Tell him that the English manner are abhorrent of every species of inhumanity and oppression and enjoin the gentlest treatment of a vanquished enemy." The Rohilla war was no brave struggle of patriots fighting for their native land ; it was a struggle of marauders fighting to maintain their supremacy over a people whom they were incapable of protecting from other marauders. But we cannot help saying that the war was wrong in principle, for the Rohillas had not provoked the English and the Vizier only relied upon to abuse his advantages.

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1. To Col. Champion from Warren Hastings 21st May 1774  
Memoirs of Warren Hastings Gleig Vol. I.

2. To Mr. Middleton from Warren Hastings 27th May, 1774  
Memoirs of Warren Hastings Gleig Vol. I.

Now we come to the objects with which the Rohilla war was undertaken. It has been often said that the acquisition of money was the sole object for which the war was undertaken. This may be one of the reasons. However important the political advantages that Hastings expected from the war may have appeared to him, he would not have embarked in it if he had not at the same time believed that it would be financially advantageous to the Company. This is the fact which he repeatedly avowed and justified. But that his main object was money is not true. Hastings never varied in the explanation of his policy before the war was undertaken, while it was in progress, after it had been completed and afterwards when Hastings had to defend himself against the attacks of his enemies. His policy was based on the necessity of guarding against the risk of ruin to the Company and to Oudh the Company's ally. The primary object of the war was to obtain security against the danger which at the time overshadowed all other considerations, that of invasion by the Marathas, who were not far from achieving that universal dominion over India which they openly declared to be their aim. To guard against the danger he believed like Clive, that no measure of precaution could be so efficacious as the maintenance of the territories of the Nawab Vizier of Oudh as a barrier between Bengal and the constantly troubled countries of northern India. He believed that to secure this object it was necessary that the only road by which Oudh was easily accessible to the inroads of Maratha armies should be closed. The only means by which this could be done was by the Union of Rohilkhand with Oudh and by the expulsion of the band of turbulent and fruitless Afghans who, not many years before had established themselves in the very quarter from which danger threatened. It was proved by experience that to obtain the desired security by an alliance with the Rohillas was impossible. Hastings was morally bound in his dealings with the Vizier and the Rohillas, to conform to a standard of conduct as high as that recognized by civilized nations in their dealings. In the opinion of Hastings the conduct of

the Rohillas in breaking their treaty with the Vizier, and in carrying on negotiations with the common enemy, constituted provocation, and that term can hardly be limited to the case of actual aggression. Financial advantage was an accessory argument. Judged by its results the policy of Hastings was eminently successful. Many a wild Maratha battle had still to be fought.

Hastings was of opinion that on the annexation of Rohilkhand to Oudh depended not only the tranquillity and safety of Oudh, but the tranquillity and safety of the English possessions too. Rohilkhand was the gate of Oudh, and as Hastings wrote to the Directors "If<sup>1</sup> the Marathas, either by the defeat, or which was as likely to happen, by the desertion of the Rohillas to their cause, should join a footing in that country, nothing could oppose them entering into the province of Oudh and laying it waste, inspite of any attempt of our forces to prevent them." His minute which he laid before the Board on the advantages of the Rohilla expedition gives a clear idea of his policy. "Our<sup>2</sup> ally would obtain by this acquisition a complete compact state shut in effectually from foreign invasions by the Ganges, all the way from the frontiers of Bihar to the mountains of Tibet, while he would remain equally accessible to our forces from the above provinces either for hostilities or protection. It would give him wealth, of which we should partake and give him security without any dangerous increase of power. It would undoubtedly by bringing his frontier nearer to the Marathas, to whom singly he would be no match, render him more dependent on us and cement the union more firmly between us."

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1. Secret Select Committee Proceedings. 8th December 1774  
Vol. I p. 141.

2. Secret Select Committee Proceedings. 26th November 1773  
Vol. I p. 80.

Chapter IV

## Warren Hastings and the Marathas

BEFORE we study Hastings' relations with the Marathas, it is desirable to know something of the Maratha constitution. The constitution of the Maratha State was despotic. The sovereign had the title of Rajah and the office was hereditary. But he had lost his authority and the actual power had gone into the hands of Peshwa who had virtually become the sovereign. The Rajah or Chhatrapati had only the show and name of sovereignty. He was merely a cipher and a prisoner in the fortress of Sittara. The Marathas were as a matter of fact a confederacy of notable Chiefs, who though quarrelling among themselves and parleying with the English in order to alarm each other, always combined to delude and resist the foreigner in the end. They held in the centre of India a position which enabled them to threaten the three divided English Presidencies and to intrigue successfully against them at Mysore and Hyderabad. But to the misfortune of the marathas and to the advantage of the British who were eager to expand their hold in India, Peshwa Madhav Rao I died on November 18, 1772. According to G. S. Sardesai<sup>1</sup> "the culminating point of Maratha ascending in India was not the reverse sustained at Panipat in 1761, as is popularly supposed, but the death of their greatest Peshwa Madhav Rao in the year 1772."

It will be in the fitness of things to know something

1. G. S. Sardesai: the Main currents of Marathas History  
p. 132.

regarding the aggressive actions of the Bombay Government towards the Marathas, though of course, under the directions of the Home-Government. The President of Bombay Council Mr. Hornby, having received orders from the Home Government to try to acquire from the Marathas some places on the mainland of India, like Salsette, Bassein, Elephanta, Koranja and other islands in the vicinity of Bombay and to station a British agent at Poona in order to gain that object, appointed Motsyn for this purpose. Mr. Motsyn was well posted with the position of the Marathas and he was to guide the Bombay authorities for taking steps as the situation in Poona suggested. So immediately after the death of Madhav Rao I, the Bombay authorities launched unprovoked aggressive attack on the Maratha posts of Thana, Bassein, Vijaydurg and Ratnagiri on the West Coast but their attempt failed because of stiff opposition from Trimbak Vinayak and naval officer Dhulap of Vijaydurg. Motsyn, of course, remained in Poona trying to seek an other opportunity for the mischief and fulfil Home-government's designs. "No<sup>1</sup> body suspected that Motsyn's presence in Poona was in any way harmful. But ever since the last days of Madhav Rao I, Motsyn was keenly watching the position of affairs at Poona, with the sole object of weakening the Maratha power by supplying valuable day-to-day information to the Bombay council and urging his countrymen to profit by the difficulties of the Maratha government." On 30th August 1773 Narayan Rao along with ten others was murdered. This murder of the Peshwah was the result of a palace conspiracy and Raghunath Rao was a party to it. Immediately after the murder Motsyn was found frequently calling on Raghunath Rao offering British help if he needed. This fact gives an idea of the British knowing about the conspiracy but there is no evidence to prove the British complicity in the conspiracy. Raghunath Rao became the Peshwa and on Oct. 10, 1773 he got the robes of Peshwaship from Chhattarpati. Meanwhile Ram Shastri, the Chief Justice, had started the inquiry into the murder of Peshwa

Narayan Rao and there prevailed in Poona and outside a strong general feeling against Raghunath Rao holding the post of Peshwa as he was proved to be the author of murder. According to Forbe<sup>1</sup> "There being no instance of one member of the sacred Brahman order taking away the life of an other: The Hindu annals had never before recorded the murder of a Brahman; and the dagger directed by a near relation of the same sacred caste dreadfully increases the heinous character of the deed." Meanwhile Ram Shastri's inquiry had held Raghunath Rao as the main culprit in the murder of the Peshwa and this reduced the chances of Raghunath Rao to be acknowledged as the Peshwa by the people and the Maratha nobles. Soon after the decree a council known as the Barbhais (twelve comrades) was formed to administer the country and it expelled Raghunath Rao from his position and it brought war with the British, known as the first Maratha war which lasted for eight years from 1774 to 1782. There was every possibility of Raghunath Rao being captured by the Barbhais but to their surprise the British made an attack on the fort of Thana, the principal post commanding the whole Salsette region and captured it on 28th of December. According to G. S. Sardesai,<sup>2</sup> "This sudden and unproved aggression on the part of the English when most amicable relations existed between the two states, embarrassed the ministers intensely and afforded a welcome chance to Raghunath Rao to extricate himself from instant capture." Raghunath Rao's hopes of remaining the legitimate Peshwa were soon shattered by the birth of a son to Gangabai widow of Narayan Rao at Purandar on 18th April. The birth of heir apparent raised the strength, power and prestige of the Barbhais and destroyed the strength and plans of Raghunath Rao. The infant Peshwa Madhav Rao II received the robes of Peshwaship on May 28, 1774. From now on Raghunath Rao solicited British help for regaining his lost

1. Forbes' Oriental Memoirs 1, p. 303.

2. G. S. Sardesai : New History of the Marathas Volume III  
p. 43.

position and in this attempt he was helped by Motsyn and Gambier. Through their efforts Raghunath Rao succeeded in getting a treaty signed with the British known by the name of Treaty of Surat on 6th March, 1775. According to this the British agreed to get Raghunath Rao re-instated as Peshwa and he in return was to cede all the Bombay Islands, including Thana, Bassein, Salsette, Talukas of Jambusar and Olpad near Bombay and to pay one and half lacs of rupees every month for the maintenance of a British contingent of 2500 persons. In pursuance of this agreement the British forces under the command of Col. Keatinge started the war against the Poona administration. According to G. S. Sardesai<sup>1</sup> "Had not Nana and Mahadji acted in concert and brought all their resources to bear on this war with the British, there would have been an end of the Maratha power at this juncture. The British had not even a plausible excuse at the time to give shelter to Raghoba and start a wanton war, when an heir was born to the murdered Peshwa."

Now we come to the other side of the picture, that is the role of Hastings as head of the supreme government in India. On October 26, 1774 Hastings became the first Governor-General of India. On learning about the treaty of Surat entered into by the Bombay Government with Raghunath Rao, Hastings addressed a strong remonstrance to Bombay Government, declaring the treaty of Surat unauthorized and asking them to stop war. He pronounced the treaty unreasonable, impolitic, unjust and unauthorized. "It<sup>2</sup> is unreasonable because treaty was formed with Raghoba at a time in which he appears to have been totally abandoned by his former adherents. It was impolitic because it threw the whole burthen of war on the company without a force at the command of the Presidency equal to the undertaking, without money or certain resources, and because it was undertaken without any regard to the general interests of

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1. G. S. Sardesai: *The main currents of Maratha History*, p. 136.

2. Secret Select committee proceedings, Vol. II, P. 391.

other settlements of the company in India. It was unjust because "they had received no injury from part of the Maratha State which could authorise their interfering in their mutual dissensions, nor were under any actual ties to assist Raghoba." But this letter reached the Bombay government on 21st May when the British and Maratha forces were actually locked in a deadly combat. On 31st May a second letter of protest was sent which declared,<sup>1</sup> "we hold the treaty that you have entered into with Raghoba invalid and the war which you have undertaken against the Maratha State, impolitic, dangerous, unauthorized and unjust: both are expressly contrary to the late Act of Parliament..... We require you to withdraw the company's forces to your own garrison in whatever state your affairs may be, unless that safety may be endangered by their retreat." The Bombay government, of course, paid no heed to these orders of the Supreme Government and in open defiance of them continued the war on their own account. The expedition was badly conducted and it was signally unsuccessful. It very nearly came to a disastrous end, although the English managed to keep Salsette. The Council at Calcutta naturally threw on the Governor-General all the responsibility of having refused to insist on the recall of the English troops. On the command of the majority Col. Upton was deputed to negotiate with the ruling ministerial party at Poona. Upton was well received in a full Darbar at Poona and on his arrival hostilities were suspended. Upton tried his utmost to reap some gains for the company throughout his prolonged negotiations but he failed to reach any settlement because of British refusal to surrender Raghoba and their insistence of having Bassein, Salsette and Broach. On the failure of negotiations Haripant Phadke was instructed to start the offensive at once and on 7th March Hastings issued fresh orders to resume the war.

But at this time an accident occurred which forced the Poona authorities to make peace with Upton. A pretender

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1. Forrest; Maratha series, P. 238. Secret Committee's Vth Report, P. 80.

calling himself Sadashiv Rao Bhau, who had been confined since 1765, suddenly escaped from the fort of Ratnagiri on 18th February 1776 and raised the banner of revolt against the Poona authorities. This sudden outbreak forced the Marathas to make the treaty of Purandar with Upton on first of March. According to this treaty the fort of Thana and the Island of Salsette were to remain with the English, the sum of 12 lacs was to be paid to the British in cash by the Poona authorities for the expenses the company had incurred on account of Raghunath Rao. Raghunath Rao was to receive an allowance of 3 lacs and 15 thousand annually, and he was to withdraw completely from the state affairs and the English were to retain the territory they had conquered in Gujerat and they were to cease to interfere, with the affairs of Gaikwad. According to G. S. Sardesai,<sup>1</sup> "this treaty of Purandar after all was a patch work of compromises and not an agreement heartily assented to by either party." Any how this compromise gave an opportunity to the Poona authorities to deal with the pretender effectively who was captured and put to death after a trial on 18th December 1776. The truce proved only a temporary and hollow one. The Bombay government continued to give protection to Raghoba and the Marathas delayed and evaded the concessions they had made. Two years practically passed in appeals from the Bombay and Poona authorities to the Governor-General-in-council to reconcile them.

In 1777, however, matters took a new and alarming turn. A French adventurer named St. Lubin who declared himself as an accredited agent of the French King arrived at Poona in 1777 with presents and letters to the Maratha court from the King of France. He was received with great pomp and honour by the Poona authorities. Nana had made great friendship with him. Just at this time Mostyn also arrived at Poona to relieve Col. Upton. He was given cold reception. St. Lubin stayed in Poona for about a year endeavouring to make a defensive alliance with the Marathas against the

British. If he had succeeded in making the alliance and in establishing a factory supported by a military force at Poona, the French would have regained their former importance in India, and the English would have had to battle with them for supremacy in the East. At this critical hour the rivalry between Succaram Bapu, the aged premier and his younger associate Nana Phadnis created a division in the Poona Cabinet, and the former made overtures for the assistance of the company to restore Raghoba to Poona. The Bombay Government continued to have successes in seducing Moraba Phandis to his side against Nana Phandis and Succaram had agreed to help Moraba in this adventure. The Bombay Government thought it justified to support this new adventure and it wanted the support of the supreme Government which was gained only by the casting vote of Hastings. Francis and Wheler condemned the resolution of support as illegal, unjust and impolitic. They said that it was illegal because it was taken without the sanction of the supreme authority, unjust because it was contrary to the treaty of Purandar and impolitic because it involved the English in the dangers and burdens of war. Hastings and Barwell argued that the emergency justified the illegality, that it was not contrary to the treaty because the principal person with whom the treaty had been made, had proposed it, and that it was not impolitic because it would give the English permanent influences in the Maratha Empire. A force under Col. Leslie was ordered to cross the continent and place itself under the orders of Govt. of Bombay. Meanwhile the news of a grave nature reached the Board, the surrender of General Burgoyne to General Gates on the 14th October in America. Francis requested his colleagues to consider<sup>1</sup> "Whether the unfortunate event in America ought not to have a general influence upon our measures here—whether policy or prudence do not plainly dictate to us that—we should stand on our defence, and not weaken or divide the force on which the safety of Bengal depends." Hastings who had decided to support the project

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1. Proceedings of the Secret Select Committee, Vol. II, P. 391.

at once replied<sup>1</sup> "I see no connection between them (the affairs in America) and the concerns of this government, much less can I agree that with such superior advantages as we possess over every power which can oppose us, we should act merely on the defensive and abruptly stop the operation of a measure of such importance to the national interests and to the national safety as that in which we have now decidedly engaged, with the eyes of All India turned upon it." Hastings was conscious of the severe defeats suffered by the British in America and he wanted to compensate those defeats by winning laurels in India. According to G. S. Sardesai<sup>2</sup> "Severe defeats suffered by England in the American war of Independence in the year 1777 fired Hastings' ambition for retrieving the lost fortunes of England by creating a new Empire in India ... He not only now gave up all his former friendly views towards the Poona ministers, but went to the other extreme of declaring an open war on them, even setting aside the instructions he had received from the home authorities not to undertake fresh operations in favour of R' rao." These instructions dated 14th July 1777 ran thus<sup>3</sup> : "So long as Raghoba is with you, you must prevent him from forming any plan against the ministerial party at Poona : and we hereby, positively order you not to engage with him in any scheme whatever for retrieving his affairs without the consent of the court of Directors. At the same time you must protect his person from violence." So inspite of these orders Hastings accepted the Bombay Government proposal for a second expedition and set aside the treaty of Purandar and authorized the Bombay Council on 23rd March, 1778 to conduct Raghunath Rao to Poona, place him as their own nominee in the Peshwa's seat and seize the Maratha's possessions on the West coast. Hastings earnestly tried to overcome the Marathas through as many channels as came

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1. Proceedings of the Secret Select committee, Vol. II, P- 634, June 22, 1778.

2. G. S. Sardesai : New history of the Marathas, pages 67-69.

3. Forest I. p. 314.

ready to his hand—first by inducing Mudhoji Bhosla of Nagpur to become Chhatrapati of Satara as Ramraja was on his death bed and then by seducing Mahadji Sindhia from his allegiance to Poona. But before any tangible results could be secured, the Marathas inflicted a disastrous defeat upon the British forces at Talegaon on 9th January, 1779 and Hastings' schemes fell through. As a result of this defeat the British were compelled to open negotiations with the Marathas. Mr. Farmer was deputed by the British to make a treaty with Mahadji for the safe return of British force. The treaty of Wadgaon was made which stipulated the surrender of R' rao ; return of Salsette, Thana and the territory captured by the British in Gujerat, the force from Bengal to be ordered back and placing of two Englishmen as hostages in Maratha hands until the terms had been faithfully executed. Gleig on this treaty writes thus:<sup>1</sup> “Never had so disgraceful an affair occurred since first the English had established themselves as a substantive power in the east and its effects were instantly felt in all quarters of India ... the Maratha party hostile to the English took fresh courage.” This set back moved the whole British Nation to depths of anger and passion for revenge. Hastings took no time to repudiate the treaty, declaring it to be unauthorized. Raghunath Rao had fled away from the captivity after murdering his keepers and joined General Goddard at Surat who was keen to take full revenge of the defeat at Talegaon.

Nana and Mahadji took up the new challenge from General Goddard and they secretly organized an All India confederacy against the British power. Nana made a Grand quadruple alliance against the British—with Nizam of Hyderabad, Haidar Ali of Mysore, Bhosla of Nagpur and the Peshwa's government. Hastings was also a great diplomat and he with the aim to divide the Marathas strength and to divert it from General Goddard, who had won some victories on the west coast, sent a strong force under Major Camac to invade Sindhia's country and to attack his capital. This

1. Gleig's *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, Vol. II, p. 229.

proposition was of course, opposed by Francis and Wheler. They opposed it on the ground of expense, the time chosen, and because they considered that<sup>1</sup> "a peace was indispensably necessary to save the Indian company and every interest connected with their, from the greatest distress if not certain ruin". Hastings replied that the rainy season was no impediment to the British troops, but a great one to the Marathas which consisted only of Cavalry. "The objection made to the expense," he admitted, "is a material one but a vigorous assertion cannot be made without expense, nor can the war be concluded honourably or prosecuted successfully without such an exertion." Francis and Whelen continued to oppose Hastings' policy regarding the conduct of war. While the campaign in Gujrat was going on, Haidar Ali's armies poured down their Karnatak passes to spread fire and sword through the coastal plain of Madras. As a result of it the Anglo-Maratha war took a new turn. The very existence of British power was in danger. Warren Hastings had now become extremely nervous and he wanted to end the war with the Marathas in order to concentrate his energies upon Haidar Ali. Hearing the defeat of Camac near Sirouj, Hastings started making efforts for making a peace through various channels. To bring the war to an end Hastings was prepared to go to any length. He wrote to Anderson :<sup>2</sup> "It is not peace with conditions of advantage that we want but a speedy peace; and we would rather purchase it with the sacrifice of every foot of ground excepting Salsette and the little islands adjacent to Bombay. Get Bassein, if you can ; but if this is likely to prove an obstacle in the conclusion of the treaty give it up." But Hastings was not willing to purchase peace at the price of honour. He wrote to Anderson ;<sup>3</sup> "you may consent to yield what is our and that we can in honour grant but we

1. Secret Select committee Proceedings : June 19, 1780. Volume II., p. 693.

2. Letter to David Anderson from Hastings : Gleig's Memoirs of Warren Hastings, Vol. II.

3. Letter to David Anderson from Hastings : Gleig's Memoirs of Warren Hastings, Vol. III., Dec. 10, 1781, p. 823.

will never suffer our treaties to be infringed, nor our faiths to be violated." How serious was the situation in Madras then can be understood from the letter of the Select Committee of Madras to Hastings on 22nd March, 1782. They wrote,<sup>1</sup> "Peace with the Marathas is become absolutely necessary to us and unless it is very soon concluded, there is reason to apprehend the most fatal consequences to the British interests on this coast." The unwise policy of Hastings had upset people so much that a joint letter by Lord Macartoney, the newly appointed Governor of Madras, Sir John Macpherson, the newly appointed member of the Governor-General's council, General Sir Eyre Coote and Admiral Hughes was sent to the Peshwa at Poona, setting aside the usual constitutional procedure. The letter dated 11th Sept., 1781 reads,<sup>2</sup> "Orders have arrived not only from the company but from the king of Great Britain... These orders are that their servants in India should not aim at new conquests, but live in peace and amity with all the powers in India... The orders are to settle immediately a peace and a treaty of friendship with your government, which will be ratified by the king and Parliament and which cannot be altered by any servants of the company in India. We have sent to General Goddard and to the Presidency of Bombay the company's commands to cease all hostilities against you and have no doubt that you will direct hostilities to cease against us. Please write without delay to the Governor General and council the particular stipulations you desire of an everlasting friendship."

Ultimately after months of tiresome discussion and a good deal of manoeuvring on the part of both the parties a final treaty was made between the Marathas and the British on May 17, 1782 known by the name of the Treaty of Salbye. Mahadji Sindia signed the treaty on behalf of the Marathas and he was truly regarded as<sup>3</sup> "the main prop of the Maratha

1. Warren Hastings' letters, Dodwell, p. 117.

2. Forrest's Maratha series, p. 461.

3. Hastings' letter to Wheler 22nd April 1784. Forrest Imp. Rec., Volume III, p. 1087.

state." The treaty in no way raised the English reputation or diminished the Maratha power in India.

In the end if we are to find out the main objects pursued by both the parties, and we are to satisfy ourself with the views of G. S. Sardesai, who wrote,<sup>1</sup> "It will be noticed that the history of the period covered by the first Anglo-Maratha war (1774-1782) fully illustrates the restless ambition of Hornby and Motsyn in Bombay and then of Warren Hastings in Calcutta. It was to satisfy this ambition for dominion, this desire to make up for the loss of the American colonies by fresh acquisitions in India, that the fugitive Peshwa R' Rao was harboured and supported by the British authorities." To the good luck of the Marathas Nana who was a great diplomat, fully understood the English designs, as is clear from a letter he wrote to Haidar Ali on 7th Feb., 1780.<sup>2</sup> "Divide and grab is their main principle. They are so blinded by selfish interest, that they never observe written agreements and solemn promises. God alone can fathom their bare intrigues that are bent upon subjugating the states of Poona, Nagpur, Mysore and Hyderabad one by one, by enlisting the sympathy of one to put down the others. They know best how to destroy Indian cohesion. They are adepts in the art of creating insidious differences and destroying the harmony of a state." Marathas had fought this war to bring to justice Raghunath Rao the murderer of the Peshwa and to save the Maratha state from the British aggression. The Marathas had ultimately succeeded. They got practically all they had lost by the treaty of Salbye except the Island of Salsette and some smaller ones near Bombay and the city of Broach. But the war cost a lot to the British both in men and material and in position. But Hastings succeeded in maintaining English position in India when the sinews of the nation were strained to their utmost endurance on sea and land in all parts of the world. It was this

1. G. S. Sardesai : New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, P. 70.

2. Raj Vol. 1956. Vide also Treaties and Agreements P. 85 : Quoted by G. S. Sardesai in History of the Marathas, Vol. III, P. 97.

Maratha war which may be taken to have been the fountain head of the deep waters in which Hastings soon afterwards very nearly lost his footing. Although fired with the ambition of establishing the British Empire in India, the expulsion of the French influence from the Maratha state and establishment of his own were his main objects in determining his policy towards the Marathas. He himself wrote, "the expulsion of the French from the Maratha state and the establishment of our own in its stead were our objects in our just adoption of the Bombay plan." International factors and unwise and aggressive policy followed by the Bombay government and later on supported by Hastings brought the fortunes of the English to the lowest water-mark. Lyall wrote about the times thus<sup>1</sup> "the fortunes of the English in India had fallen to their lowest water-mark. Nor were the dangers from the Indian powers the only ones. France had already declared war upon England, having formed a coalition with Spain, Holland and the North American States. Haidar Ali had made common cause with the Marathas and had drawn the Nizam into an alliance against the English and obtained promise of French cooperation on the west Coast." So in these circumstances hard-pressed as he was, it is really creditable to Hastings from the British point of view, to be able to maintain the British position in India. It was a master stroke of his policy to detract the Marathas from Haidar Ali by making the treaty of Salbye. Had he not done so, the foundations of British Empire in India would have been shaken, and perhaps it might have been uprooted from India altogether. On the Maratha side<sup>2</sup> "this Anglo-Maratha war covering nearly nine years from the murder of Narayan Rao to the treaty of Salbye, emphatically discloses the vitality of the Maratha nation which had not been exhausted either with the disaster of Panipat or the death of their great Peshwa Madhay Rao."

1. Lyall: *British Dominion in India*, P. 195.

2. G. S. Sardesai. *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III  
P. 123.

In our final conclusion we cannot help saying that Hastings Chief object was to extend the British influence to every part of India and in this attempt he planned his strategy both defensively and aggressively. Mr. J. S. Cotton has truly said,<sup>1</sup> "If Clive's sword acquired the Indian Empire, it was the brain of Hastings that planned the system of Civil administration and his genius that saved the Empire in its darkest hour." It was Hastings who laid the true foundations of British imperialism in India and who deprived Indians of their independent existence by his clever genius and aggressive designs.

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1. Encyclopaedia Britannica. Title Warren Hastings.

Chapter V

## The Insurrection at Benaras

It looks erroneous to say that Hindu princes had long ruled over Benaras, for Chait Singh's father Bulwant Singh, was the first of his family to hold the rank of Raja or to have any claim to the somewhat misleading title of prince. Neither Mansa Ram nor his son Bulwant Singh, can be regarded as independent rulers. By the article of the treaty of Fyzabad in 1775 the sovereignty of the zimindari of Benaras and its independence was ceded in perpetuity to the Company by Asaf-ud-daulah. Hastings refused to accept the responsibility of this treaty. He proposed a plan to the Board that Chait Singh should pay to the Company's treasury at Patna, in equal monthly instalments, a yearly revenue of 22,48449 the sum settled with the late Nawab Shuja-ud-daulah in his presence at Benaras on 6th September 1773. On acknowledging the sovereignty of the Company, Chait Singh was to exercise uncontrolled authority over his zimindari both in the collection of the revenues and in the administration of justice. Sanads were to be granted to Chait Singh empowering him to appoint officers incharge of the Kotwali and the Mint. In return for these concessions Chait Singh was to pay and maintain a body of 2,000 cavalry to which the Company would grant additional allowances when employed in their service. So long as Chait Singh remained faithful to his agreements, that is, was loyal to the Company and punctual in the payment of his revenues, no further demands were to

be made from him and there was to be no interference with his authority.

In support of this plea Hastings contented that Chait Singh could well afford to pay the stipulated revenue as his zimindari was one of the richest revenue producing areas in India. Further Hastings said that Chait Singh would be told that he held the mint on condition that he faithfully observed the regulations laid down and did not alter the weight of the coines or the amount of alloy. The majority however ignored Hastings's views and resolved that Chait Singh should pay to the Company at Benaras the exact amount he had formerly paid to Shuja-ud-daulah, and that further inquiries should be made to ascertain the extra-income from the Kotwali and the Mint. The majority decided to send Francis Fowka which was a direct insult to Hastings. He proceeded to Benaras with instructions to deliver to Chait Singh his Sanads of investiture and to make the inquiries. Chait Singh was to be notified that the Company possessed sovereign rights over his zimindari, in acknowledgment of which he was to swear an oath of allegiance and present the Company with a nazrana of 10,000 rupees. The Raja was to be assured that the Company had no intention of increasing his tribute so long as he adhered to the terms of his agreement, but any negotiations with the enemies of the Company would lead to the forfeiture of his lands. The sum to be paid was fixed at 2221745 sicca rupees. For the protection of his territories he was permitted to raise and maintain a body of 3,000 cavalry, disciplined and equipped after the European fashion.

Towards the end of 1776 Hastings again commanded the majority on his Council. His first step was the recall of Bristow and Fowka fram Oudh and Benaras respectively who were the creatures of the late majority. This was immediately followed by the appointment of Thomas Graham as resident at Benaras with Denial Barwell as his assistant. Sometime later Fowka was again appointed resident, but was removed for the second time and Markham was appointed in his stood.

The duel had relieved Hastings of Francis, but his external difficulties grew and multiplied, to the great detriment of his finances. On the 7th of July 1778, news that war had broken out with France reached Fort William. A Council was immediately held, and Hastings, often bringing forward various measures for the defence of the city and province proposed that<sup>1</sup> "Raja Chait Singh be requested in form to contribute his share of the burthen of the present war by consenting to the establishment of three regular battalions of sepoys, to be raised and maintained at his expense." Francis and Wheler agreed provided Chait Singh was informed that this additional charge would not be imposed on him beyond the duration of the war. Chait Singh immediately instructed Ali Naqi, his Vakil, to discuss the matter with Hastings and to represent his inability to maintain three battalions. The Vakil fought hard to have the subsidy fixed at 3 lakhs of rupees, but was informed that it could not be less than 5 lakhs. He finally agreed to this sum for one year only. Hastings proposed that he should pay five lakhs annually while the war lasted. It was agreed that a demand should be immediately made for the first payment. A year later the demand was repeated but Graham reported that Chait Singh professed his inability to provide this sum. This was followed by a letter by Chait Singh pleading poverty and complaining that the demand for five lakhs was in excess of the amount expressed in his Patta. He also ventured to assert that, when paying the first demand, he had been assured that he would not be called upon for any further contribution. Hastings immediately pronounced him contumacious and proposed that two battalions of sepoys should be held in readiness to march to Benaras, the whole expense of the expedition to be borne by Chait Singh. Graham was ordered to repeat his demand. After the threat of marching troops, on 22nd October 1779 Graham was able to report that Chait Singh had paid the subsidy in full. A third demand was made in 1780 which got the support of Francis and Wheler too. In

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1. Forest Selections, Vol. I, Requisition on Chayt Singh.

1780 when this demand was made the Raja sent a confidential agent to Hastings asking forgiveness for his past conduct and assuring him of his future compliance with his orders. At the same time he attempted to bribe Hastings by offering him a present of two lacs, hoping that, if accepted, this would be an end to the third demand for five lakhs. At first Hastings refused but later, being in need of money to equip an expedition against Sindhiā, accepted the gift; and much to the consternation of the Raja promptly renewed his demand for the subsidy. Chait Singh unreservedly acquiesced in this demand. But Hastings's trust was misplaced.

At a consultation held on the 26th of September 1780 Sir Eyre Coote presented a plan for the defence of Bengal and Oudh which he had sketched at the desire of the Board. As the invasion of Bihar was expected, Coote proposed to station a large body of infantry in that province together with two regiments of horse and one thousand or as many of Chait Singh's cavalry as they could get. On the 2nd of November the attention of the Board was again drawn to the want of cavalry, and Hastings was requested to write to Chait Singh for such as he could spare. In December the resident of Benaras wrote to Hastings that he had repeatedly pressed the Raja on the subject of the cavalry, but could obtain no answer. On the 21st May, 1781 Hastings proposed to the Board that he should visit Oudh in order to have an interview with the Nawab whose province had fallen into a state of great disorder and confusion. He also stated that he hoped to take advantage of his visit to Oudh to conclude negotiations with the Raja of Benaras. He got from the Council full authority as Governor-General in Council, to make treaties with native powers and make arrangements with the Raja of Benaras.

Before starting for Benaras, Hastings informed Wheeler and others that he intended to fine Chait Singh 50 lakhs of rupees. He determined as he said,<sup>1</sup> "to make him pay

1. Forrest Selections, Vol. II, A Narrative of the Insurrection which happened in the Zimindary, p. 135, 141.

largely for his pardon, to exact a severe vengeance for his delinquency, and to draw from his guilt the means of relief to the Company's distresses." On reaching Benaras Hastings transmitted to the Raja a statement of his offences and the reply which the Raja sent to the Governor-General was false. After weighing the conflicting considerations Hastings ordered the resident to put Chait Singh under arrest ; and he sent two Companies of the sepoys to Benaras to mount-guard in the Raja's palace. A numerous body of armed men from the Raja's fortified palace at Ram Nagar suddenly crossed the river, attacked and massacred the whole party. The sepoys having no ammunition fell without resistance. The Raja escaped and fled to his fortress Lutee Garh. In a letter dated 4th September 1781 Hastings announced to the Board that Captain Blair with the Battalion and two Companies of his own grenadiers and two guns had attacked the enemy at Patteta. "They were prepared to receive him, and made a very spirited resistance ; after a very long action, the fortune of the day was happily turned in our favour by a bold but well-judged manœuvre ... the enemy's numbers are reported 8,000 or 9,000 men ... Our loss which I add with regret exceeds 105 killed and wounded ; theirs must be proportionately more, though unknown. Then Major Popham marched towards Luteef-Poor. At Lora they met a body of 2,000 armed men of the enemy, which they defeated and dispersed with little loss on the English side, but on the opposite side 200 men killed on the spot. The next morning they took possession of the pass and of the fort of Luteef-Poor which was evacuated by the Raja's forces.

On the 25th of September Hastings returned to Benaras, where he found the city restored to a state of order and tranquillity. He issued proclamations offering pardon to all except Chait Singh and his brother. A grand son of Raja Bulwant Singh by a daughter was proclaimed Raja with great solemnity. Hastings also took steps for the protection of the persons and property of the inhabitants of the sacred city. Then he introduced reforms in the administration of the state.

Hastings was accused of violating a treaty with an independent prince, unjustly compelling him to pay five lakhs of rupees annually for three years, intending to impose on him an enormous fine for imputed delinquency and causing his person to be arrested. It is clear however beyond all question that Chait Singh was a dependent on Shuja-ud-Daulah and afterwards on the English Government. He was neither more or less than "Zimindar of Benaras by a Sanad granted to him by the English. He also made an agreement binding himself to do everything that might be useful and needful for the interest and security of the country." The interest for the security of the Company's country demanded that he should contribute money and troops for its defence. It was also in accordance with long established custom that a vassal should afford aid to the sovereign state in money and troops. The conduct of Chait Singh in hesitating to afford the necessary aid to his suzerain at a time of great danger was contumacious and refractory and deserving of punishment. 50 lakhs was really a large fine but it by no means exceeded the ability of Chait Singh to pay it with ease. When we consider that the English were surrounded by enemies, it is difficult to regard the imposition of even a too heavy fine on a refractory vassal an act of criminality. In enforcing the demands Hastings was actuated by no personal malicious motives, but was compelled by the pressing exigencies of the hour and the desire to save India to Great Britain. "I had no other view in it," he said, "than that of relieving the necessities of the Company by an act which I considered to be strictly just."

Chait Singh's plea of poverty was merely a pretext, the zimindari was worth 50 lakhs, and was the richest and it had been rented at 28 lakhs. Thus Hastings's demand for a small temporary subsidy in time of war was not unjust. On the contrary it was a sound policy. Moreover the company were defending their possessions and Chait Singh's zimindari formed part of those possessions. Chait Singh also refused to supply the Company with a body of cavalry for service in the war. To meet the evasion of Chait Singh it was later reduced

to 1500 and later still to 1000 but not a single man joined the forces of the Company.

Again Chait Singh was by no means a loyal subject before 1781. It is generally said that the insurrection was entirely unpremeditated and that Chait Singh was driven into open rebellion by the high-handed action of Hastings himself. But this is wrong. As far back as 1774 Champion had reported that he was less disposed towards the Company's service than he should have been. On March 8, 1777 Graham reported the visit of Chait Singh to his forts for repairing them and stocking them with provisions. Hastings had also learned from good authority that the Raja was carrying on a correspondence with the Marathas. Even Fowke reported on 10th August 1780 that Chait Singh was busily assembling his forces and industriously concealing their number from him. Sir Eyre Coote reported that the Raja had raised a force of 30,000 men and was fortifying important places inside his zimindari.

Then Raja Chait Singh deliberately evaded his payments of the subsidy. After many excuses and protestations of inability he at length consented, with a very ill-grace, to the payment, and with a much worse discharged it. The next demand too was in the same way dealt with. It was only on the threat of marching troops that he paid the money. The balance of the third demand too was paid in the like manner and only when Col. Comac's detachment had suffered the extremity of distress from the want of money and very great desertions. Chait Singh was responsible for this distress. Then Chait Singh refused to furnish 2000 troops inspite of Warren Hasting's writing and the resident's saying amounted to an act of disobedience on his part for the orders of the Company. There were reports that he had inherited a vast mass of wealth from his father Bulwant Singh which he had secured in the too strong fortresses of Bidjeygur and Lutteepoor, and that he kept a large military establishment; and that his amils and tenants were encouraged and habituated to treat English passengers with inhospitality and with enmity.

Whatever Hastings did he did to relieve the necessities of the Company in times of utmost danger. He undoubtedly intended to punish the Raja's contumacy and to supply the fiscal wants of the Company by placing Chait Singh between the alternatives of paying an enormous fine or losing his lands, and in this he followed the recognized custom of needy Indian potentates. His conduct was at least impolitic and imprudent. He treated Chait Singh severely. But one thing is clear beyond doubt that there were no private motives behind his action in Benaras. He did everything for the good of the Company. His chief aim was so save India for Great Britain.

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Chapter VI

## Hastings and the Begums of Oudh

Now we come to Hastings's Policy towards the Begums of Oudh. Strictly speaking there were only two Begums with whom Hastings came into contact. They were the mother and widow of Shuja-ud-daulah, known to history as the Burra and Bahu Begums. The opponents of Hastings gave the name of begum to every member of Shuja-ud-daulah's female establishment. They even extended its use to his concubines, but they were kept entirely separate from the real princesses. To most of them Shuja-ud-daulah perhaps did not go except once. For what happened to these unfortunate women Hastings cannot be held responsible.

Shuja-ud-daulah had great respect both for his wife and mother ; and when he died, he left enormous treasure in the hands of the Begums at Fyzabad. This treasure was estimated to be nearly two million sterling. The Begums were also in possession of rich Jagirs from which they derived large incomes. They governed their Jagirs quite independently of the Oudh sovereign. They kept armed-forces. There can be little doubt that their position, backed as it was by armed forces and the defiant attitude they assumed towards the Nawab, were injurious in the highest degree to the good Government of Oudh. They began to interfere directly in the affairs of the state immediately after the accession of Asaf-ud-daulah.

Shuja-ud-daulah died heavily in debt. He owed large

arrears of subsidy to the Company. His son Asaf-ud-daulah made some futile attempts to enforce his claims upon the treasure. His own expenditure was in excess of his receipts. The Nawab Asaf-ud-daulah applied for financial assistance to his mother Bahu Begum and requested Mr. Bristow the resident to intercede with the Begum on his behalf. She eventually consented to give her son 30 lakhs of rupees and to grant him in addition 26 lakhs, on condition the Company guaranteed to maintain her in the full enjoyment of her Jagirs and property. An agreement was concluded according to which she was to pay the Nawab 30 lakhs ; 19 lakhs in specie and jewels and the remaining eleven lakhs in goods, elephants and lands. The Nawab was not to interfere in the affairs of her Jagirs for her life. Bristow stood as a guarantee to the treaty on behalf of the Company. The Governor-General-in-Council sanctioned it. Asaf-ud-daulah expressed his desire to Bristow not to use any violence upon the Begum. Bristow wrote "who<sup>1</sup> on desiring me to undertake the negotiations, repeatedly and earnestly expressed his desire not to use any violence."

In December 1775 the Board got a letter from the Begum, severely criticizing the conduct of her son. By the agreement it was settled that she should liquidate 11 lakhs of the demand by giving goods, elephants and camels. She asserted that the Nawab's agents had valued these goods at a fourth of their intrinsic value, and that the Nawab claimed these goods as his own. She appealed to the feelings of Hastings by informing him that she 'went to the Nawab when his hour of death approached and ask him to whose charge he left me. He replied 'Apply to Mr. Hastings whenever you have occasion for assistance ; he will befriend you when I am no more, and will comply with whatever you may desire of him.' She desired Hastings to ask the Nawab to dismiss Murtaz Khan the minister and to restore Mohammad Elich Khan and Mohammad Busheree Khan to

their old offices, and she added "By<sup>1</sup> them the revenue will be collected, and whatever sums are due to the English Chiefs I will cause to be paid out of the revenues. This I will strictly perform." Hastings wrote a short minute on the letter in which he stated, "I<sup>2</sup> am of opinion and recommend that a letter be written by the Board to Mr. Bristow, commanding him to remonstrate to the Nawab against the seizure of the goods as his own original property, which he received from his mother in payment of the 11 lakhs stipulated to be so made, to insist on the Nawabs receiving them in payment and that he either admit of the valuation which she has put upon them, or that he allow them to be approved by persons appointed for that purpose by both parties". The majority however were less disposed to favour the cause of the Begum. The Board sent the Begum's letter to the resident and demanded the full explanation of it. On the 3rd June 1776 Mr. Bristow wrote to the Board that the complaints regarding the violence of the servants of the Nawab were totally unfounded. The temper and the sentiment of the Begum can be known from her last letter to Bristow, which he enclosed with his to the Board. She wrote "you were a party in this affair and took from me the sum of 56 lakhs of rupees; if you will cause the 56 lakhs of rupees to be restored to me, then the Coulname will not be binding, and do not you then take any part in the affair, and let Asaf-ud-daulah and Murtaza cause in whatever manner they are able, take sums of money from me. They will then see the consequences. "Mr. Bristow also informed the Board that" while the Begum complains of the Nawab and the minister, she forgets the conducts of her own servants, who refuse to acknowledge the Nawab's authority or to obey his decrees, and beat his executive officers."

A year after the settlement the Burra Begum complained that the Nawab had deprived her of the allowance granted by Shauj-ud-daulah, that he had resumed her Jagirs ; and that he

1. Forrest Selections Vol. I Begums of Oudh.

2. Secret Select Committee Proceedings 3rd Jan., 1776 Vol. II  
p. 471.

had not made provisions for the late ruler's women and children, the inmates of the Khurd Mahal at Fyzabad. Shortly afterwards Bahu Begum again complained to the resident who accused the Nawab of refusing to comply with the terms of the agreement which had been guaranteed by Bristow. Therefore she was entitled to the protection of the Company.

When Hastings went to Benaras the Government was in the utmost distress for money. The treasury of Bengal was empty. The Vizier of Oudh owed the Company a crore and half of rupees. But the Vizier informed Hastings at Chunar that his own funds were exhausted and that it was no longer possible for him to maintain the English troops employed in protecting his territories. This was true. In the meantime Hastings was severely pressed for money to carry on the war in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies where the public funds were exhausted. The Banaras insurrection brought his financial embarrassments to their climax. The Nawab was asked to find money for the emergency. The Nawab, while explaining that he had none of his own, pointed out that nothing but the guarantee of Bengal Government itself prevented his laying hands on a reserve that would for the time relieve the necessities of both. By the 2nd article of Chunar treaty it was stipulated, "that<sup>1</sup> as great distress has arisen to the Nawab's Government from the military power and dominion assumed by the Jagirdars, he be permitted to resume such as he may find necessary with a reserve that all such for the amount of whose Jagirdars the Company are guarantees shall, in case of the resumption of their lands be paid the amount of their net collections through the resident in ready money." A vast number of Jagirs were resumed. In consenting to the resumption of the Begum's Jagirs much cirminality had been imputed to Hastings.

Now we are to consider the reasons which prompted Hastings after the insurrection at Benaras to declare the

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1. Secret Select Committee Proceedings of the July 1783 Vol. III p. 988.

guarantee given to the Begums to be no longer binding upon the Company. Lord Thurlow argued that the resumption of the Jagirs on the payment of a proper equivalent was no breach of agreement. Hastings justified his action on the ground that the rebellious conduct of the Begums was a sufficient reason for withdrawing the protection. "My Lord," he said, at the time of my giving this consent I was, from the intelligence I had received, fully convinced of the Begums disaffection to our Government...It was the general rumour of the country, that she and her minister aided and supported Chait Singh in his rebellion." Mill's argument that the evidence was collected after Hastings had given his consent to the resumption of the Jagirs is groundless. Eleven days before the treaty of Chunar was signed Col. Hannay wrote "this town Fyzabad has more the appearance of belonging to Chait Singh than the Vizier.....within these few days Shaik Chaan, with nearly 1000 horse and foot, has marched from hence to Benaras (they were raised here)." He further wrote "the people who are daily sent to him (Chait Singh) horse and foot, from Fyzabad and the seat of rebellion I have before named is very great." On the 13th he wrote "the<sup>2</sup> present insurrection is said and believed to be with an intention to expel the English" "The old Begum does in the most open and violent manner support Chait Singh's rebellion and the insurrection." These statements were corroborated by Captain Williams who wrote "Seadit Ally and the Begums are concerned deeply in the late business" the resident also approved these charges.

Hastings was convinced of the Begum's guilt. They openly set at naught the Nawab's authority. They were stubborn and indignant; the Nawab was daunted by their resistance. He applied for aid to the English resident and asked for the English troops to oppose the Begums levies. The

1. Secret Select Committee Proceedings 28th July, 1783. Vol. III p. 1004.

2. Secret Select Committee Proceedings 28th July, 1783 Vol. III, p. 1005.

Chief-justice had ruled out that if the Begums were in actual rebellion, it was necessary to the existence of the Nawab's Government that he should have the power of taking away the treasures which enabled them to support rebellion. Fortified by the advice of the Chief-justice and the affidavits the resident had put some heart into the campaign against the Begums. The elder lady told the resident that if he would only stand neutral she would speedily dispose of the Nawab, his minister and army.

When the Nawab appointed an amil to take charge of the Bahu Begum's Jagirs she took immediate steps to defend them. Bahar Ali Khan her chief openly declared that he would lay waste the country of Gonda were any attempt made to resume the Begum's Jagirs. The Bahu Begum wrote "should the country be lost to me, it shall be lost to all." Notwithstanding the complaints and threats of his mother the Nawab appointed his own amils incharge of her Jagirs and announced his intention of proceeding to Fyzabad to demand his father's treasure and to imprison and punish her eunuchs. Hastings instructed Middleton to prevent any abuse of the powers given to those employed in the service of depriving the Begums of their treasures. Hastings also wrote to Middleton "You must not allow any negotiations or forbearance, but must present both services, until the Begums are at the entire mercy of the Nawab, their Jagirs in the quiet possession of his amils and their wealth in such charge as may secure it against private embezzlement." This order was used as an evidence against him.

The Nawab hesitated to move, not only through fear of Begum's temper but also from a certain apprehension lest if he encouraged the English to interfere in his domestic affairs, they might prove in the end even more troublesome than his grandmother, but at length he marched to Fyzabad with the British resident. The Begums did not venture upon resistance ; the troops were quietly disarmed ; the districts in their possession were resumed ; the palace was blockaded ; the eunuchs surrendered, were imprisoned and forced to give

up some secret hoards of money ; and the resident returned to Lucknow with a sum of money equal to the liquidation of the Nawab's debt to the Company.

The spoilation of the Begums formed the 2nd charge against Hastings on his return to England. According to the prosecution his conduct was highly criminal, first, in assenting to the resumption of the Jagirs, and afterwards, in using a degree of compulsion to induce him to carry it out. He was also charged with having consented to the seizure by the Nawab of the treasure belonging to his mother and grandmother ; and having caused hardships and distresses to be inflicted on the women of the Khurd Mahal ; and with having tortured the two eunuchs. Finally he was accused of disobeying the orders of the court of Directors in not making a full inquiry into the facts of the Begum's rebellion. Hastings was once more the victim of the majority's policy.

In order to recover the treasure the Nawab and his ministers had to adopt severe measures towards the two servants who had the chief influence over the Begums. The cruelty practiced has been greatly exaggerated. But for what took place Hastings at Calcutta cannot be held responsible. The treasure was a state property and the debts ought to have been paid from them. The widow by Mohamedan Law, was entitled only to 1/8 after the debts were paid, and a grand mother had no claim to inheritance when the daughter was living. The widow was also entitled to her unpaid dower from the private estate. But the fact that under Shuja-ud-daulah there was no distinction between public funds and the private purse of the sovereign, that no will was even produced, and that he died in debt to the Company, Asaf-ud-daulah's claim to this treasure is very much strengthened.

Hastings was convinced of the Begum's treachery during the rebellion of Chait Singh. He wrote to a friend "On<sup>1</sup> the revolt of Chait Singh she and the old Begum, Shuja-ud-daulah's mother raised troops, caused levies to be made for

Chait Singh, excited all the zimindars of Gorakpur and Bareich to rebellion, cut off many parties of sepoys, and the principal Aumil and a favourite of the younger Begum, openly opposed and attacked Col Gordon.....these old women had very high effected our destruction". The case against the Begums was supported by affidavits and Hannay's accusations, supported and confirmed by Middleton. Mill argues that the seclusion of the Begums rendered it impossible for them to supervise the conduct of their officials and armed followers; and that they cannot for this reason be held responsible for what happened. In reply to it, it is enough to say that if they were incapable of responsibility they were unfit to have power. About the charge that Hastings disobeyed the orders of the Directors in making an inquiry, Hastings asserted "it would have been an act of insanity in us to have obeyed it in August 1783, when a perfect reconciliation had taken place between the Nawab and his mother."

The resumption of the Jagirs was fairly defensible in the interest of both the Nawab and the Company. The order was general not confined only to the jagirs of the Begums. They were also to be compensated by monthly cash payments equal to the annual value of their jagirs. Secondly these jagirs had been found out highly prejudicial to the revenues of the state. The resumption on the payment of proper equivalent was no breach of engagements said Lord Thurlow. Political expediency and the doctrine that the end justifies the means played an important part in the 18th century diplomacy. At this time Hastings was desperately pressed for money to carry on the war against Hyder Ali of Mysore and the Marathas. The treaty of Chunar was bold attempt at reforming the Nawab's administration, reformation which effected the Company's interest as vitally as it did those of the Nawab.

The defiant attitude of the Begums towards the Nawab was intolerable. They kept forces. Their servants disobeyed the orders of the Nawab. Their position, backed as it was by armed forces and the defiant attitude they assumed towards the Nawab, was injurious to the good Government of Oudh.

They had excited disturbances in the country and a revolt against the Vizier.

To cancel the guarantee and leave the Nawab to deal with the defiant princesses himself was justified. To push him on and actively assist in measures of coercion against women was conduct unworthy and indefensible. It is here that Hastings and Middleton lost caste. The whole odium of coercion fell upon the English, for the Vizier took care to give out that he was their unwilling tool. Hastings knew that his character would suffer from this conduct, but to devote one's character to the cause of one's country, is at least patriotic. He was described as one who had compelled a son to rob his parents. Sheridan declared that Hastings forced a dagger into the Nawab's hand and pointed it against the bosom of his mother.

Chapter VII

## Hastings and Tibet Affairs

THERE has always been intercourse of some kind between India and Tibet. The Tibetanians drew their religion from India and from times immemorial they have been visiting the holy shrines relating to Lord Buddha in this land. There has always been some sort of trade going on between the two countries. Tibetan traders have come to India and Indian traders have gone to Tibet. The cultural ties between the two countries have been so strong that even inter-marriages between the border peoples are not uncommon. But this unfortunate country—a country of Lamas, has always been subject to political domination either by one country or the other. China, Russia, and Englaad have always been in the race for domination. According to E. J. Dillon<sup>1</sup> "such a country as Tibet which is politically 'some important and economically so lucrative, and herself too weak to maintain her sovereign rights, according to the present practices of international morality. must fall under the domination of 'strong power'. It was in the days of Warren Hastings that the British first entered this race for domination over Tibet."<sup>1</sup>

The opportunity came in 1772 when the Bhutanese, all of a sudden, descended into the plains of Bengal, over-ran Kuch-Behar carried away its rajah as a prisoner of war, seized

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1. 'The Mission to Tibet by E. J. Dillon. The contemporary Review, January, 1904, pp. 123—142. quoted by Dr. Taraknath Dass in 'British expansion in Tibet' page 85.

his territory and thus offered a menace to the British province of Bengal. The people of Kuch-Behar approached the Governor of Bengal for help which he readily agreed to render. The British forces drove out the mountaineers from Bengal, though it also cost many precious lives to the British.

One of the important British officers killed was Capt. Jones. The Bhutanese on the other hand when hard-pressed by the British appealed to Tashi Lama who was then acting as Regent of Tibet during the infancy of Dalai Lama for help. The Tashi Lama, interceding on behalf of Rajah of Bhutan wrote to Warren Hastings thus<sup>1</sup>: "Neither to molest nor to persecute is my aim...But in justice and humanity I am informed you for surpass...I have been repeatedly informed that you have been engaged in hostilities against the Deb Judhur, to which it is said, the Deb's own criminal conduct in committing revages and other outrages on your frontier has given rise...However his party has been defeated, many of his people have been killed and it is evident that your army had been victorious. But now I take upon me to be his mediator, and to represent to you that, as the said Deb Raja is dependent upon the Dalai Lama...should you persist in offering further molestation to the Deb Raja's country, it will irritate both the Lama and all his subjects against you. Therefore, from a regard to our religion and customs, I request you will cease all hostilities against him and in doing this you will confer the greatest favour and friendship upon me...As for my part I am but a Fakir, and it is the custom of my sect, with the rosary in our hands, to pray for the welfare of mankind and for the peace and happiness of the inhabitants of this country ; and I do now, with head uncovered, entreat that you may cease all hostilities against the Deb in future."

Thus the Bhutanese attack on Kuch-Behar and the Tibetanians appearance on the scene in her favour, gave Warren

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1. India and Tibet by Francis Younghusband published by John Murray, London 1910—Pages 5 and 6.

Hastings an opportunity to further his forward policy and extend the sway of British Imperialism. Hastings wrote back to Tashi Lama proposing a general treaty of amity and commerce between Bengal and Tibet and he even obtained a passport for a European to go there for negotiating a treaty. He selected Bogle for this mission—‘a servant of a company, well-known for his intelligence, assiduity and exactness in affairs. Hastings was not sure of the success of the mission but he wanted to make the most of the opportunity offered. Like a shrewd politician and a man who had studied Asiatic policy in nearly every part of Asia, Hastings was polite to Lama in writing, reflecting the English character in dealing with Asiatics which is<sup>1</sup> “taking the opportunity, striking while the iron hot, not taking the chance go by, knowing our mind, knowing what we want, and acting decisively when the exact occasion arises.” Warren Hastings had his own policy and it was then<sup>2</sup> “not to sit still within his borders, supremely indifferent to what occurred on the other side, and intent upon respecting not merely the independence but also the isolation of his neighbours. It was a forward policy, and combined in a noteworthy manner alertness, deliberation, repidity and persistency assertiveness and receptivity. He sought to secure his borders by at once striking when danger threatened, but also taking infinite pains over long periods of time to promote ordinary neighbourly intercourse with those on the other side.”

Having determined his policy and selected his agent Hastings gave him the following instructions which Bogle had to keep in mind.<sup>3</sup> “I desire you will proceed to Lhasa...the design of your mission is to open a mutual and equal communication of trade between the inhabitants of Bhutan (Tibet) and Bengal, and you will be guided by your own judgment in using such means of negotiations as may be mostly likely to effect this purpose .... The following will be also proper objects of your inquiry—the nature of the roads between the borders of Bengal and Lhasa, and of the

1. *Ibid.* Page 7.

2. *Ibid.* page 7 and 8.

3. “Mission of Bogle” by Markham, page 6.

country lying between ; the communications between Lhasa and the neighbouring countries, their government, revenue and manners." Bogle was given full freedom to spend any amount of money and any amount of time and to employ any means to achieve his object. According to Younghusband Hastings said to Bogle,<sup>1</sup> "I want the thing done and all you require to get it done you shall have." Bogle, with these free instructions, set out from Calcutta in the middle of May, 1774 and reached near Shigatse where the Tashi Lama was at that time, on November 8, 1774. It was here that the first interview between a Britisher and Lama took place on November 9. After praising one an other, conversation turned on the point of trade. The Tibetans were ready to do anything but they could do nothing without the permission of the Chinese government to whom they were all subject. During these negotiations Bogle even hinted at the advisability of the Tibetans coming into some form of alliance with the English so that the influence of the latter might be used to refrain the Gurkhas of Nepal from attacking Tibet and its feudatories. It appealed to the Lama and on his suggestion Bogle wrote a letter containing one sentence of business, to the Regent at Lhasa. It said,<sup>2</sup> "I request in the name of the Governor, my master, that you will allow merchants to trade between this country and Bengal." But this request remained unanswered for about one hundred and twenty five years. Opposition to the English plans came not only from the Chinese but also from the ruler of Nepal, who wrote a letter at that time to the Tashi Lama and the Regent at Lhasa, announcing his intention to establish a few factories at the Tibet border for trade purposes and for this purpose he desired the concurrence of the Tibetans. He further desired the Tibetans<sup>3</sup> "to have no connection with Fringies or Moghals and not to allow them into the country, but to follow the ancient custom which he was resolved likewise to do."

1. "India and Tibet" by Sir Francis Younghusband page 10.

2. Ibid. page 21.

3. Ibid, pages 21-22.

There is no doubt that Bogle failed to establish trade relations between India and Tibet but his mission definitely opened the way for new opportunity and pointed out the main obstacles in the way of achievement of British purpose. Dr. Taraknath Das in his book 'British Expansion in Tibet' writes thus on it,<sup>1</sup> "from the Report of Bogle's mission it became evidence that as early as 1774, the British authorities found three distinct obstacles in the way of establishing Anglo-Tibetan relations, to the interests of Great Britain; they were :—(1) the anti-British attitude of the border states like Nepal and Bhutan which wanted to draw Tibet with them ; (2) the attitude of the Chinese Regent at Lhasa who represented strong Chinese opposition to British penetration in Tibet ; (3) growing Russian interest towards Tibet." From now onward there came a shift in the British Policy and the British government came to follow<sup>2</sup> "the path of least resistance eliminating each one of these three obstacles already cited, viz. resistance of border states, Chinese opposition, and Russian influence in a masterly fashion."

Warren Hastings was not content with a single effort to give practical shape to his forward policy. He sent Dr. Hamilton thrice to Bhutan for inquiring into and settling certain causes of dispute and also to congratulate the new Deb Raja on his succession. "Thus,<sup>3</sup> as Markhan points out, Warren Hastings, by keeping up a regular intercourse with the Bhutan rulers, by maintaining a correspondence with the Tashi Lama, and by means of an annual fair at Rangpur, prevented the opening made by Bogle from a galli being closed." In 1779 Hastings once again appointed Bogle as envoy to Tibet but unfortunately his death in 1781 prevented him from going to Tibet again. The Tashi Lama had died earlier in November 1780. Both these deaths gave a fatal blow to Hastings's plans to make conquest of Tibet first through trade. But Hastings was not a person to lose heart.

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1. 'British expansion in Tibet' by Dr. Tarak Nath Das, page 4-5.
2. Ibid., pages 7-8.
3. India and Tibet by Francis Younghusband, page 26.

According to Younghusband<sup>1</sup> "persistency of aim and watchfulness for opportunities, making the most of the occasion offered and decisiveness of action—these were always Hastings's guiding principles."

This opportunity came in February 1782. The news reached Calcutta that the Tashi Lama in accordance with the Tibetan ideas of re-incarnatives, had reappeared in the person of an infant and Hastings then resolved to send another mission to Tibet to congratulate the Regent. For this purpose he appointed Captain Samuel Turner. Turner spent about a year in Tibet but he did not go to Lhasa. Still he succeeded in getting some concessions from the Regent of Tashi Lama at Shigatse. He obtained<sup>2</sup> "his promise of encouragement to all merchants, natives of India, that may be sent to traffic in Tibet, on behalf of the government of Bengal." Turner rejoined Hastings at Patna in March, 1784. These relations prospered during Hastings' regime but they all broke down when Tibet came to be attacked by Nepal in 1792 and saved by the Chinese. The presence of an English envoy at Nepal at that time made Tibetans suspicious of the British intentions and hence all relations broke down. According to Younghusband<sup>3</sup> "thus the results of Warren Hastings's forethought and careful, steady endeavour were all lost."

In the last we come to the conclusion that the ultimate object of the British was to reduce Tibet into practically a British protectorate and it was Hastings who covered the first step to achieve this object and we fully agree with Dr. Taraknath when he says,<sup>4</sup> "the Nature of the British policy towards Tibet, to an ordinary observer, seems to be somewhat vacilating and slow. In reality, however, it has always been steady and well-calculated, leading to success."

1. India & Tibet by Francis Younghusband, page 27.

2. Turner's mission, page 374.

3. India & Tibet by Francis Younghusband, page 31.

4. 'British Expansion in Tibet' Dr. Taraknath Das, page 1.

### Chapter VIII

## Hyder Ali of Mysore and the end of Wars

IN 1769 when peace was made with Hyder Ali; he had induced the Madras Government to insert a clause agreeing to join him if he were attacked. But when the Marathas did attack him the English excused themselves for assisting him against the Marathas. When, therefore, the Marathas were attacked by the Bombay Government they found in Hyder Ali a willing ally against the English.. Thus the two warlike states that would have naturally fought each other were united against a common enemy. The Nizam was too closely connected with the reigning party at Poona, and had declared against the British client Raghoba, but he remained quiet until the Madras Government chose to make a treaty with his brother Bazalut Jang without consulting him who agreed to cede the British a district. At this he took great and reasonable umbrage, and threatened to join the Marathas against the British. Upon news of the rupture with France in 1778 the English in India attacked all the French settlements ; and although Hyder Ali warned the Madras authorities that Mahe, a small french possession on the coast, was under his special protectorate, it was seized by an English force. The only powers in India whom Hyder Ali respected were the English and the Marathas, but a fight between the two gave him an opportunity of paying off old and new scores. He corresponded with the French who sent him ammunitions of war from Bourbon Island. He also sympathised with the Nizam, who made a league with him.

In July 1780, he descended upon the Carnatic with a great and irresistible predatory army. He plundered and wasted the country far and wide. Col. Baillie went out against him with a small force but was defeated and captured ; and the whole Presidency was brought to the verge of total ruin. In the month of Sept., 1780 the news reached Calcutta from the Governor and Council of Madras of the melancholy fate of Col. Baillie's detachment, the retreat of the army under General Munro and the desperate state of the affairs on the coast of Coromandal. Hastings acted with his usual energy on receiving the news of this tremendous calamity. It was immediately resolved that the most vigorous measures should be taken to assist the Presidency of Madras with men and money from Bengal. Accordingly transports were fitted out with all expedition and General Sir Eyre Coote was sent round by sea. At this time the English were also engaged in a war with the Maratha Government at Poona, which had lasted for some years. Much expense had already been incurred.

Sir Eyre Coote was sent to Madras with all the men and money that could be collected, and with an order from the supreme Council suspending the Governor of Madras. But the mischief had been very effectually done ; for Hyder Ali took Arcot and occupied large tracts of country until he was defeated but not driven off by Coote in 1781, after a series of operations which drained the treasuries and nearly exhausted the British military resources. The Nizam Hyder Ali and the Marathas were for some time in combination against the British; and their pressure failed Hastings in his attempt to detach from the confederacy the Maratha Chief of Nagpur, who sent a sidarm of cavalry to threaten the eastern frontier of Bengal, and extracted a large sum of money as the price of his neutrality.

The position of Hastings during the year 1780 was one of extreme distress and anxiety. In one of his letters (Dec. 1780) he refers to the 'present alarming situation of the Company's affairs', and reports that the 'Vast expense for the subsistence and defence of both Madras and Bombay, has reduced him to the 'mortifying extremity of raising loans, has

forced him to suspend the commercial investments and has generally loaded him with heavy financial embarrassments.' It was under the stress of financial exigencies produced by this situations, that Hastings was driven to the expedients and exactions, which formed the ground of the most serious charges in his subsequent impeachment.

In March 1781 a detachment of French Troops had landed at Pandicherry, and had effected a junction with the Mysore forces, which were never-the-less severely defeated by Coote at Porto Novo in July. Early in 1782 Hyder Ali's son Tippoo managed to surround and cut to pieces a body of English and native troops under Col Braith Waite. He disregarding a friendly warning allowed himself to be surrounded by Tippoo's army, and had to defend himself with 100 English soldiers and 1200 sepoys out-numbered by twenty to one. The whole party was cut to pieces, and the English officers were barely saved by the generous interposition of the French officers who served with the Mysore force.

Hostilities were now slackening in the Europe. Hyder Ali, ancient and inveterate foe of the English died undefeated and full of years in Dec. 1782, and earlier in the same year peace was concluded with the Marathas. The treaty with the Marathas was finally ratified in 1783 when Hastings atlast emerged out of the stormy zone of war by which he had for the last five years been encompassed. Tippoo Sultan had continued the war after his father's death; but it ceased when the French withdrew from him their support on concluding peace with the English in 1783. Macartney submitted to terms with Mysore of which Hastings disapproved, and which he successfully tried to amend.

There ensued a general cessation of war-fare through out three continents of Asia, Europe and America. For Hastings the war time was finished. Bombay had been preserved, and Madras saved, as he himself declared, from annihilation; the Carnatic had been rescued from Hyder Ali; the Marathas pacified and the Nizam conciliated. He had run through very narrow and perilous straits.

Now we come to the discussion of Hastings's policy in general. His policy from the beginning had been to strengthen the ruler of Oudh as the chief English ally and as

bulwark against other native powers. His chief aim was to maintain intact the territorial possessions of the East India Company which were threatened by the Maratha power by a formidable coalition of the country powers and by the arrival of a French Naval force under the Bailli de Suffren. Hastings relations with Oudh had for their object the strengthening of an important buffer state, upon whose security the safety of Bengal depended. Nawab Vizier of Oudh was the only ruler who because of the geographical position of his state, could best serve the English purpose. And the only effectual method of strengthening him was by landing him disciplined troops under treaty engagements of mutual defence. To strengthen and give armed force to the Vizier of Oudh was to build up a firm breakwater against the restless, treacherous and far-roving Maratha herds. His chief object was to extend the British influence to every part of India and neighbouring states like Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet. Mr. J. S. Cotton has truly said "If<sup>1</sup> Clive's sword acquired the Indian Empire, it was the brain of Hastings that planned the system of civil administration and his genius that saved the Empire in its darkest hour." Mainly speaking there were two objects of his foreign policy. They were to relieve the distress of the Company and pay off their heavy debts in England and to enlarge the political influence of the Company without enlarging its territory or dividing their military strength.

It was Hastings who cemented the foundations of the British Empire in India laid down by Clive. He did everything in the interests of the mother country. He was patriotic to the very core of his heart. He can be truly said as the saviour of the British position in India and protector of British Imperialism. He was definitely the greatest of all the great Governor Generals of India for the stand point of extension of British Imperialism and his policy was forward policy. According to Younghusband<sup>2</sup> "It was forward policy and combined in a noteworthy manner alertness and deliberation, rapidity and persistency, assertiveness and receptivity."

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